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POPULAR LECTURES

ON

THE BOOKS

OF THE

NEW TESTAMENT

BY

AUGUSTUS H. STRONG, D. D., LL. D., LITT. D.

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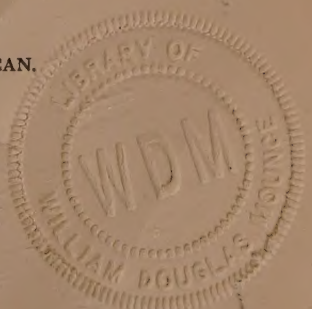
THE GRIFFITH & ROWLAND PRESS

PHILADELPHIA

BOSTON CHICAGO ST. LOUIS TORONTO, CAN.



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Published March, 1914

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PREFACE

This book, with the exception of the eighth chapter, is a stenographic report of lectures delivered to a large Sunday-school class, which at times numbered as many as three hundred. This fact will explain the familiar and even colloquial style of address. While the problems of history and exegesis were discussed, the lectures were intended to be popular, in the sense of being intelligible to all. It is hoped that this has not prevented them from being fairly representative of the results of modern scholarship. They are now printed in the belief that they may be useful to a larger number of Christian people than that which first listened to them.

A. H. S.

Rochester, January 9, 1914.

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THE NEW TESTAMENT AS A WHOLE

We are to study the books of the New Testament. It is the New Testament of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. It is well, at the very beginning, to know what that phrase, the "New Testament," means. The words are taken from the institution of the Supper. It is there that we first find them. Our old version reads: "This is my blood of the New Testament, which was shed for many for the remission of sins." If you look into the Revised Version, you will see that the translation is changed; and now we have: "This is my blood of the new *covenant,* which was shed for many for the remission of sins." The word "testament" means "covenant." It often is so translated; and we now have to study together the New Covenant between God and sinful man.

Of course this suggests at once the relation between the new covenant and the old covenant. A covenant is an agreement, an agreement between God and man. Provisionally there was an agreement that men should be saved if they could only present to God perfect works of obedience. This was a trial or test; intended to show the real condition of man. God never expected any human being under the old covenant to present such works of perfect obedience; he only intended to demonstrate the fact that human nature was helpless, and that it could not be saved in this way. Therefore, for many, many generations there was going on

a process of testing, with a view to showing that man could never save himself.

The Scriptures of the old covenant represent that history of probation; and we see how, in many ways, it constituted a preparation for the only covenant between God and man, by which we can hope for salvation: namely, the covenant of grace, the covenant of mercy in Jesus Christ, through whom we are saved, not by works of righteousness, but by simple faith. In this covenant of grace salvation is not by character, but by the blood of Jesus.

This long preparation, under the old covenant, was conducted by the law; there were ordinances of God; the God of gods uttered his commands. But there was also prophecy, in which was set forth the coming of a Deliverer, through whom men were to be saved. Men even then were not saved by their works, but they were saved by faith in God, so far as he was revealed to them—practically in the same way in which we are saved by believing in God and his method of salvation—although they did not know it was a salvation through Jesus Christ.

Under the old covenant there were also judgments. You know in how many ways those were experienced: Through the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah; by the destruction of Achan and his family; and then, finally, by the exiling of the chosen people from their native land and the scattering of them among the heathen. That intimates to us one way in which God made this preparatory work lead to Christ.

The Jews, on account of their sins, were scattered abroad; and wherever they went they erected syna-

gogues and places of worship; and these were afterward centers for the preaching of the gospel. The Jews learned the Greek language, which was the language of the world; just as the French language, not many years ago, was the diplomatic language of Europe. They came under the influence of the Roman law. Alexander had unified the Greek East. Cæsar had unified the Latin West, and had brought the world under one government; so that converts from among the Jews were now able to publish the new doctrine of Christ. All roads led to Rome, the capital; and there was peace prevailing throughout the world. The Jews had developed a spirit of proselytism, which was laid hold of by Christians, so that, when the Jews became Christians, they began to proselytize just as they had proselytized when they were Jews. All these things were preparations for the coming of Christ, preparations for the new covenant. When the fulness of time had come, Jesus himself appeared. There had been four hundred years of silence in which God had not spoken. But now once more the voice of inspiration began to be heard; and the messenger of the new covenant, Jesus Christ, appeared: he who seals the true covenant between God and man, he who reconciles God to man and man to God.

The Jews sacrificed the Son of God, the only true propitiation for the sins of man, the only real reparation for the evil-doing of mankind; not only a propitiation, but an atonement, an embodied union between God and man. In Jesus Christ we have humanity and Deity united: in fact, the beginning of the Church is Christ himself. Humanity is united to God in him,

and we become united to God only as we become one with Christ. We are sons of God only as we are partakers in the sacrifice of Jesus. In Christ the covenant was ratified, the real covenant between God and man; the covenant which declared and established absolute unity between Deity and the sinful world. This was the final covenant, of which all prior covenants were symbols and preparations.

Have you ever noticed that, in the Old Testament, everything points forward? There are no indications of completeness anywhere. On the other hand, the indications are that the system was not a complete one, that it looked for something to come, to add perfection to it; but, in the New Testament, on the other hand, you find the most strenuous prohibitions against the adding or taking away of a single jot or tittle from this revelation. The New Testament is the final revelation. It is the true covenant, the covenant for which all the Old Testament prepared the way, the complete and perfect union between God and man in the person of Jesus Christ.

You know how the word "deed" has come to be applied to a document. That word deed meant originally an act, and a deed of property is the act of giving; but the act of giving is not a document. The deed is really made before the document is signed, and the document only expresses the act and puts it in form.

Just so, what we call the New Testament or the New Covenant is simply the outward formal record of a deed, a covenant, between God and man, which was instituted before a single word was put in writing.

We look, therefore, upon this New Testament as the title-deed to our inheritance. Here we have a precious document, in which is embodied a covenant between God and man, in which is inscribed and set forth an assurance to us of an eternal inheritance. "Search the Scriptures, therefore, for in them ye have eternal life." What an argument it is for the study of the New Testament, that we should search these title-deeds, to see how much God has given to us in Jesus Christ, his Son! The New Testament is the record of the new covenant, the agreement, the reconciliation between God and man, the union of Deity with humanity.

But we mistake greatly if we suppose that this book, at the beginning, was complete; that, at the time of the first apostles, it was ready-made. The second thing that I wish to bring to your attention to-day, after this first thought that we have here the new covenant embodied, put into form, is that this New Testament was a collection of many books; that, at the first, it was not one complete thing. The word itself is very significant, the word "Bible." The word bible was originally plural—the singular *biblion,* the plural was *biblia.* The word *biblia* was originally used of this production which we now call the Old Testament and the New Testament. In other words, the thought of the plurality of the production was the prominent thought; and it was only afterward, as I shall show you, that that plural word came to be a singular word, came to be "The Bible," came to be *biblion,* a singular noun, whereas at first it was *biblia.* The transition from the plural to the singular is very significant of

the change in the estimation which Christian people put upon what we now call the books of the New Testament. We have here a divine unity; but it is to the thought of it as a collection that I want, at this time, to call your attention.

The apostles and apostolic men felt, at first, that they were only required to communicate orally the substance of the teachings of Christ. I suppose that for twenty whole years after the Saviour's death there was not in existence a single one of these books which we call the New Testament. All the preaching of the time was oral; but it is very evident that, after one and another of the early witnesses began to die, and Christians realized that merely oral production is in danger of becoming corrupt, they began to think of the necessity of putting into permanent form this gospel of which they had been testifying. The result was that one after another of these New Testament books came into existence. The order in which the books occur in our present New Testament was not the order in which they were written. The truth is that not one of the Gospels was written until most of the Epistles had come into being. The Epistles to the Thessalonians were probably the first written, and then other Epistles followed. The majority of the Epistles were in existence before any of the Gospels were written; but it was the exigencies of the times that determined what the apostles should write. There were errors springing up, there were particular errors of unbelief and there were particular forms of wrong conduct to which Christians were exposed; and therefore it was, that the apostles wrote simple letters to the churches, warn-

ing them of these errors and instructing them on these points of which they were ignorant. So, little by little, there grew up a doctrine, a written teaching.

These letters were first written to separate churches, and the difficulties of transmission were many. There was no such thing as a printing-press. All these books had to be transcribed in manuscript, and that was a long, tedious matter. The letter that was written to one church had to be transcribed, and then communicated to another; there were no mails in those days, and no such thing as the penny post. There were also difficulties in the transmission of the doctrine, owing to persecution. There was nothing like the settled government that we have to-day. The result is that some of these books took a long time to get into circulation.

The Epistles of Peter, written, I suppose, in Babylon —far away at the East—written in a time of persecution, and perhaps hid away on account of persecution, did not come into general circulation until the middle of the fourth century. This is an isolated and very rare instance. In almost all other cases the books of the New Testament got into general circulation before the year 170, and perhaps even before the middle of the second century.

There are two catalogues of the New Testament books, both dating from about the year 170, which materially supplement each other, and together give us all of the New Testament except Second Peter and the First and Second Epistles of John—as we might say, insignificant parts of the New Testament.

It is only in the year 363, at the Council of Laodicea,

that you have all of the books of the New Testament embraced in a catalogue, and not all of the New Testament even then, for the Apocalypse was not among them. It was only in the year 397, at the Third Council of Carthage, that a list of the New Testament books was put together which embraced exactly those books which we now have in our New Testament; so, you see, that it was three hundred years after the death of the last apostle, John, before our present New Testament was actually constructed as we have it to-day. It took three hundred years, in other words, to make this collection.

It is very important, for a good many reasons, that we should recognize the fact of this gradual growth. There was divine providence in it, as we shall see. It was not left wholly to the ingenuity and skill of man, though men did exercise their ingenuity and skill in deciding as to the claims of the several books that came to their notice.

The early Church has sometimes been represented as credulously accepting whatever came to it with pretense of apostolic origin. How far from true this is we can see by remembering Paul's injunction to the Thessalonians, to use caution in putting their faith in communications professing to come from him. Melito, bishop of Sardis, made a journey into Palestine for the express purpose of ascertaining the grounds upon which the books of the Old Testament were received; and as a result of his investigation he excluded the Apocrypha.

Tertullian tells us of the deposition from office of a presbyter in Asia Minor for the crime of forging a

letter, which purported to be a letter of the apostle Paul; so you will see that there was skill used in the selection of the right writings, and that we have, in the books which now bear the name of the New Testament, the result of careful scrutiny and criticism on the part of the best Christian people. In fact, I think you will have brought before your mind the great work which was performed by Christian people in that early century, in that they rejected a great deal more than they received. The whole of the Apocryphal literature —as great in bulk as the New Testament—was set aside as unworthy of a place in the sacred canon. The true word of God is manifest from this fact, that all the books of the New Testament, as we have them now, sound one peculiar note. There is a peculiar air about them; they have characteristics which are totally foreign to this Apocryphal literature of which I have spoken. There was an inner Christian sense, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, that led to the rejection of the evil, and brought into the New Testament only that which was of divine origin.

So I pass to that which is the third thought of my remarks this morning, that, although this is a collection of books and originally was entitled "The Books of the New Covenant," it came, at the last, before the fourth century was concluded, to be "The Book." There came to be recognized in it an organic unity. In other words, the *biblia* became the *biblion*. "The Books" became "The Book of God." "The Books of the New Covenant" became the New Testament.

How remarkable this is I think you will see when you remember that the apostles never gathered

together (as some have supposed) and held a consultation as to what they would write, one of them declaring that he would write this portion, and another that he would write that. There never was any consultation or calculation at all in regard to it; and the New Testament sprang up almost as a matter of accident, looking at it from a human point of view.

The apostles were widely separated: some in Rome, some in Babylon, some in Galilee, and some in Africa; and yet each one wrote with a condensation, a simplicity, a sublimity, and a spirituality that belong to no other writings of man. The condensation of the apostolic writing is something wonderful. Students of literature know how easy it is to fall into a florid, diffuse style, and how exceedingly hard it is to write in a condensed way, so that every single sentence shall be a nugget of gold. Look into the books of the heathen, and you find there a single grain of wheat in a bushel of chaff. The distinction of the New Testament is that it is all wheat, there is not one single grain of chaff. It is all good, and it is all divine.

This condensation, as a mere literary effect, is utterly inexplicable, unless you take into consideration the guidance of God. The absence of all self-assertion, the absence of all self-consciousness, is something wonderful, but also the sublimity of it all. There are more sublime writings in this New Testament than there are, I think, in all literature besides, unless you except the Old Testament Scriptures. Things that are unseen and eternal, instead of things that are seen, occupy the thought and glorify the style.

Though the New Testament is a collection by eight

or nine different writers, you have a unity of subject, spirit, and aim that is absolutely inexplicable unless you suppose it to be the book of God; unless you believe that these writers were spiritually directed in what they wrote; so that their writings, taken altogether, form a complete and organic whole. They builded better than they knew. I do not suppose that one of these writers, not even Paul himself, had any idea that his Epistles were going to be read and quoted as they have been read and quoted this morning. I do not imagine that Paul had any idea that his writings were to have texts taken from them, and that they would be the foundation of sermons in every country on earth. No one of the New Testament writers had any idea that he was writing part of a collection. It makes no difference whether he did or did not. God knew; God had a plan and purpose in it; and each workman had to lay his stone, each had to build up his part of the structure. While there was growth, while there was a gradual collection, the New Testament, at last, became one organic whole, through the power of the Holy Spirit, which worked in and through these writings and their writers.

I do not mean to say that there are no imperfections in this book; but I also do not mean to say that there is falsity or error here. It is divine communication, put in human forms and molds. There is some bad grammar now and then in the Apocalypse; there are some rhetorical infelicities that could not stand the test; but there is nothing inconsistent with truth, though the writing is full of the idiosyncrasies of the writer. The books of the New Testament are all the more

adapted to reach our hearts, they are all the more adapted to the common uses of life, just because they *come* from living hearts and minds which have been touched by the Holy Ghost. So the word of God is the Word made flesh, just as Christ is the Word made flesh in another way. This makes the New Testament a finality. It is a complete thing. It is never to be superseded, for example, by Mohammedanism, by Swedenborgianism, or by Mormonism, each of which comes to us with a new revelation, purporting to be from God, but which discloses its own falsity by violating the fundamental principle that nothing is to be added to this New Testament, because it is an organic whole, a complete revelation.

There is just one thought further, and that is this: Every organic whole is articulate, and is to be looked upon in that aspect, as well as in the aspect of its organic wholeness. This human body of ours is an organ, but there are articulate parts. There is the circulatory system, and there is the respiratory system; we have our different limbs for various offices; and there is the brain and the heart. While these are all parts of one whole, yet the fact that there is an organic whole does not prevent the existence of separate members, with separate offices. The New Testament is peculiarly articulate. I might say that it has its articulate parts, and no two of those members have precisely the same office. There are three great divisions in the New Testament; and if I impress nothing else upon your minds to-day, I should like to impress upon you the fact that there is a threefold division in the New Testament, which we cannot safely discard.

In the first place, there is history; in the second place, doctrine; and in the third place, prophecy. Where do we have the history? Why, we see at once that we have the history, as a basis of all, in the life of Christ and the apostles. In other words, the Gospels and the Acts give us the basis of the whole, the foundation of the structure. Then what comes next? Why, there comes doctrine. Where have we that doctrine? We have it in a long series of Epistles. I believe there are twenty-one of them in all—Epistles in which the spiritual meaning of Christ's life is given us; and these doctrinal teachings of the apostles contain for us something remarkable in this, that they almost, without exception, explain the germinal sayings and teachings of Jesus Christ himself. In other words, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, they expound the meaning of what Jesus Christ himself communicated. But we are not left the doctrinal teachings simply; we have also, as it were, the gates of heaven opened and a view of the future bestowed upon us. History, Doctrine, Prophecy. Jesus Christ in the flesh on the earth, teaching in the Gospels; then, Jesus Christ in his church teaching through the Epistles; and, finally, Jesus Christ in heaven, the future glory and reward of the righteous. These are the three parts of the New Testament.

The New Testament is not only an organic whole, but it is an articulate whole. It has its separate members as well as its organic unity. This great structure has its foundation in the Gospels and in the Acts; its superstructure in the doctrinal teaching of the Epistles; and its crowning dome, from which it looks up to

heaven and out to the great hereafter, in the prophecies of the Apocalypse.

You notice there is some similarity between the New and the Old Testament. The Old Testament began with history; then gave material for teaching and for worship in the Psalms and the Proverbs; and finally concluded with prophecy. So the New Testament gives history first, then doctrine, and finally prophecy.

I trust we have now a glimpse of the organism of the New Testament. The historical portion is an organism of itself, the treatment of which I must leave for another time. The doctrinal portion of the New Testament has its organic relations also, and so it is with the Apocalypse. I give you to-day only the three great divisions, the main divisions of the New Testament: History, Doctrine, and Prophecy.

Even with these few words that I have been able to speak to you this morning, contrast this organic whole of the New Testament with what you find in the Mohammedan Koran. What is the Koran? The Koran is a shapeless mass of accidental accretions, to which no human being can find beginning, middle, or end. It stamps itself at the very beginning, and to the very end it proves itself, as being purely the work of man. The New Testament, on the other hand, in contrast with heathen writings, gives us a complete whole, as beautiful a structure, taken altogether, as the Parthenon on the Acropolis at Athens, or the Saint Peter's at Rome; and all this has grown up, not by the wisdom of man, but by the wisdom and the power of God. Here you have a progressive revelation, gradually advancing with the development of Christ's doctrine, until at

last the whole structure is complete, and we have "all things that pertain to life and godliness."

Not only is this true of the New Testament, but it is true also of the relation of the New to the Old. The Bible begins with the words, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth"; and it ends with the words, "Even so come, Lord Jesus." The very beginning and the very end. And this magnificent revelation is a great bridge spanning the interval between. How wonderfully the Bible ends! How wonderful the New Testament is, in giving us first the basis of historical fact, before any inferences are to be drawn, before any doctrines are to be taught, before any application, before any prophecies. You have the solid basis of historical fact in the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

You see how important it is, then, that we should begin with understanding something of the life of Christ, because that life of Christ is the substance of the Gospels. Without understanding it, we cannot understand the gospel itself; and, therefore, next Sunday, if Providence permits, I will treat in a general way of the life of Christ, and try to give you some general views of that life, the relation of its separate years to each other, and then the relation of that life of Christ to the Gospels of which we talk.

THE LIFE OF CHRIST

I INTEND, next Sunday, to speak of "The Gospels and their Origin," and this morning to speak of something preliminary to that, viz., "The True Conception of the Life of our Lord." That life of Christ constitutes the basis and substance of the Gospel record; and it has seemed to me that, before studying the Gospels, we may do well to get into our minds some general considerations in regard to the life of Christ himself.

The first thing that needs to be impressed upon us is that this life of Jesus Christ is the life of an infinite Being upon the earth. We cannot enter upon the study of the Gospels in the proper spirit, and we cannot understand them at all, unless we appreciate the fact that this person who is set before us here is the Lord God Almighty, although he is veiled in human flesh. In other words, we have here, as John intimates to us, the temporal life of the Eternal Word, the Word made flesh, full of grace and truth.

We know what words are among men. We know that they are symbols of communication, that they are mediums of expression. I pass along the street; I hear a word of blasphemy or obscenity, and that single word opens to me the depths of an evil heart. I hear a word of kindness, I hear a word of compassion, and such a word as that is a revelation to me of a gentle and beautiful soul. By a single word I am let into the inmost life of another. In just such a way God's

word is the medium of expression, the vehicle of communication, between God and his creatures.

The word of God of which we spoke last Sunday was the outward Scripture. The Word of God of which we speak to-day is something back of the outward Scripture, of which the outward Scripture is an expression, viz., the everlasting Word that was with God before the world was, and which was God; that Word of God, God's medium of expression, God's vehicle of communication, is Jesus Christ. He existed before he came in the flesh. He exists now, although he is not here in the flesh with us, but is in heaven. From the beginning to the end he is the only Revealer of God. It is Jesus Christ through whom God created the world. It is he who upholds all things by the word of his power. It is he who conducted the history of the people of Israel in the Old Testament. It was this Eternal Word who thundered and lightened from the top of Mount Sinai, just as truly as it was he who uttered the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus Christ is the only Revealer of God; and we know nothing of God whatever, except it be through the Revealer, Jesus Christ. God in himself, apart from Christ, is utterly unknown. No man has seen God at any time; that is, apart from God's own purpose and method of revelation in Jesus Christ, no human being could ever have knowledge of him or come into communication with him. Jesus Christ is the one and only Revealer of God; in fact, we may say, Jesus Christ is the one and only Word that God ever spoke or that God ever will speak, either to us, his human creatures, or to any of the intelligences that he has made or ever will make;

and that, simply because Jesus Christ in his eternal nature is the principle of revelation in God. There is no revelation aside from or apart from him. You might just as well think of knowing the great dynamo, from which proceeds the electricity that lights our streets, without the current of electricity proceeding from it, as to think of knowing God without Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the Revealer of God; Jesus Christ is the only way by which God ever makes himself known. Therefore, he that has seen him, "hath seen the Father"; therefore, "he that doeth my will shall know of the doctrine." There is, therefore, now no other name given under heaven to man, whereby we may be saved, except the name of Jesus Christ.

Now, it is very evident, is it not, that you cannot know anything that is infinite and absolute, unless that infinite and absolute thing somehow comes under limitation? How are you going to know that which you cannot distinguish from anything else, and how can you possibly distinguish one thing from another, unless there are some limitations about that thing? If there is nothing else apart from it, you cannot know it; and, therefore, God himself, the Infinite and the Absolute One, must necessarily come into conditions or limitations, in order that we may know him. You cannot know that which is absolutely unlimited. You cannot know that which does not come into such conditions and relations that it is in contact with yourself, your faculty of knowing. Jesus Christ, the Infinite and Absolute Being, who otherwise would be unknown, came into such limitations and relations with his finite creatures that he can be understood, can be known by us;

and so we have the great God coming down into finite humanity and living a finite life, in order that we may understand him and know him.

It is just as if the ruler of a great people, in order that each one of the least and lowest of his subjects might understand him and know what he is, should come and live the life of the poorest and lowliest among them all, in order that he might teach them how to live and might teach them something of his compassionate love. Just as if the greatest of teachers should leave his desk of instruction and go down into the A, B, C class of his school, and put himself side by side with the least and humblest of his pupils, in order that he might teach this pupil how to learn; so the great God has evinced his compassion, his tenderness, his consideration for the weak, finite creatures whom he has made, by taking part with them in their ignorance and their weakness and their limitations, in order that he might show them what he is and show them what they ought to be.

Now, there are some who do not understand this limitation of God, this self-limitation of an Infinite One. They think that it is unworthy of the great God so to contract himself within the limits of the human life. They would have God live apart in seclusion, as the Greeks represent their gods on hills, careless of mankind. They think that would be worthy, more worthy of the Godhead.

Well, I have seen a great burly ruffian walking in the street with a little child; and I have seen that great ruffian stride along and drag his little girl after him, cursing her because she could not go as fast as he, and

pass over the obstacles in their path with the same ease as he; but I never thought that indicated any great nobility or dignity on his part. And I have seen a father, a great strong man, able to walk fast enough himself, slackening his pace and adapting himself to the pace of his little child, talking to her by the way, taking her weakness into consideration, and letting himself down to her infirmities, and lifting her over the hard places by the way; and I have said to myself: there is a great deal more nobility and dignity in that than there was in the conduct of the burly ruffian that I saw awhile ago, and who thought himself too great to care for a child.

Now, that is what God does. The Infinite Being shows his dignity and his glory by coming down, by considering our weakness, by putting himself at our side, by entering into our home life, by slackening his pace, by teaching us as if we were little children, making himself a little child, as it were, in order that he may show us what he is and may make us like himself. That is what God did, when the Eternal Word, the only Revealer of God, the equal of God, came down into this earthly life and became a babe, and passed through all the measures and stages of human development, in order that he might give us an object-lesson and show us what God was, in a way that we could comprehend. Ah, THERE is nobility, THERE is dignity, THERE is something divine! It is in the God-man, therefore, Christ Jesus, that we have the most vivid, the most wonderful representation of the true nature of God, the compassion, the condescension, the love of God, as well as his purity and truth and power; for it

takes power so to limit one's self and bring one's self down to the limits of human nature.

Christ, then, is not only the Word, but he is the Word made flesh. He is the Word, in infinite love, limiting himself in such a way that we can understand him; and the life of Jesus Christ is the life of this Infinite Being in these finite limitations. When an Infinite Being comes down to these limitations of a finite life, he will not, in all respects, appear as an infinite Being, but will take upon him the forms and modes of human living. In other words, he will be subject to the laws of human development, just as we, his finite creatures, are.

I remember very well the time when this doctrine was first propounded to me, and the shock it gave to my early conceptions, my misconceptions, as I think them now. I had been taught (or, if I had not been taught, I had somehow grown up to think) that our Lord Jesus Christ, through all the stages of his earthly life, was Immanuel, God with us; that all things were open to his knowledge; and that he was always exerting his infinite power. I remember, when my teacher talked to me about the suffering of Christ upon Calvary, in my heart I said: "Why, Christ could not suffer; that must have been a mere appearance; Christ was God, and God could not suffer"; and so all the representations which the teacher made of the suffering of Christ passed over my head, and made no impression upon me. I was one of the Docetæ, without knowing it. I regarded the suffering of Christ as merely a matter of appearance; I thought he could not suffer. Then, when I heard a sermon during my college course, in which it was intimated that the

appearance of Christ in the temple at twelve years old might have been the time when first our Saviour came to the knowledge of what he was as the Sent of God, the Son of God, it seemed to me as if all the foundations of my Christian belief were being shaken. I said: "Did not Christ know who he was, and what his work was, from the very beginning?" Now, I have come to think that at that time I misconstrued the meaning of the Scripture record, and did not give full weight to some declarations of Scripture which are of very great importance. Do not the Scriptures say that Jesus, as a child, grew in wisdom as well as in stature, and in favor with God and man? Then, if he grew in wisdom, there must have been a growth from a less degree of knowledge to a greater; there must have been a more incomplete consciousness of his duty and of the work that he was to do, at the beginning of his life, than there was in the latter portion of his life. And, when, in the Gospels, we read that declaration of Christ himself, "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, neither the angels of God, neither the Son," we have there a distinct declaration of the Saviour's ignorance with regard to the time of the end. There were limitations to the knowledge of Christ while he was here upon the earth. He took upon him the form of a servant; he divested himself of the exercise of his attributes when he became man; and he went through a process of human development, gradual growth in the consciousness of what he was, which was analogous to the development through which every son of Adam must pass. It was a mark of his condescension and divine love that he was

willing to put himself under these limitations, and to advance toward perfectness and knowledge through the ordinary paths of human learning and obedience. He learned obedience by the things he suffered.

You all know that if the reservoir south of the city were ever so full, you would get in your basin at home only that amount of water which was proportionate to the size of the pipe through which the water flowed. The reservoir might be ever so large, but it could never pour into your house in a larger stream than the size of the pipe permitted.

Just so there was an ocean-like fulness of resource in Jesus Christ. He was the Infinite and Eternal Word; but the channel of communication to man was only as large as the human nature which he possessed. Therefore, in those communications, he adapted himself to the limitations of humanity. He did not always know, and he did not always act, as God. Sometimes he was permitted by the Holy Spirit thus to do; and out of this ocean-like fulness of resource, he showed that he knew what was in man. Sometimes the veil was lifted; but ordinarily the veil of humanity was before his eyes, and he walked by faith just as we walk by faith.

If you could imagine the mind of a Humboldt, with all his vast amount of knowledge, being permitted to come back here to this earthly sphere and to be tabernacled once more in an earthly form; if you could believe that the transmigration of souls were possible, and the soul of Humboldt should once more take an earthly body; you may be very sure that, if it took the body of an infant, it could not manifest itself except in

an infantile way, and it could only gradually show the powers that were inherent in it. And so, if the Deity itself becomes united to human flesh, if the Deity itself joins itself to humanity, you may be very sure that the ways by which the Deity will manifest itself through the humanity will be adapted to the humanity which is taken into union with itself. You will not have everything revealed, as in a flash; there will be a gradual progress in knowledge; and there will be a gradual unfolding of the knowledge which he has gained. Let us remember that our Lord became a servant for us; that our Lord, while he was here on the earth, was living what we may call an infinite life under the forms of space and time; living the life of God in the flesh of man; and, therefore, we may find in the life of Christ something which justifies our looking for a larger revelation of his purpose as he goes on. We can find that, although he never passed from the teaching of falsehood to the teaching of truth—he is always the Eternal Truth, and just as far as he does teach he teaches the truth of God—yet, at the same time, the truth as he unfolds it now may be less complete than the truth as he unfolds it hereafter. You know he himself tells us that there are many things he could not say to us now, but he will show them to us hereafter; and so we find that there is progress in the teaching of Christ, and that there is progress in the development of Christ himself, through the Gospels; although, at the last, he is the risen and glorified Son of God.

At the very beginning of his ministry, in his discourse with Nicodemus, he shows that he has before

him the whole outline of his ministerial work, he shows that the main features of his doctrine are clear to his mind. The greatest truths of Christianity are unfolded there, in that discourse to the Jewish ruler; and yet it was only when the apostles had come, and the Holy Spirit had been bestowed, that the germinal truth was expanded, filled out, and elucidated.

So, our Lord was not so much a teacher as he was the subject of teaching. We do not deny that he was a teacher. He was the prophet of his own work; and one of his great offices was that of prophetic teacher of mankind; but, after all, his teaching was not completed when he was here in the flesh. He has been teaching through his Gospels and teaching through his Spirit ever since; and so we have, in Christ, the subject of the Gospels. We have in him the truth. In fact, we may say, we have in Jesus Christ the gospel itself. He is the glad news. He is the embodied reconciliation between God and man; the God-man shows forth the perfect union between humanity and the Deity which he has come to accomplish; and so he is not only a union between man and God, but he is the sacrifice for sins also.

I spoke of self-limitation, and I spoke of letting one's self down, in order to be understood, into the finite, in order that the finite might comprehend the Infinite. Ah, what a self-limitation there was, when this Being, who was God as well as man, died upon the cross, that he, who was everlasting life, should, in connection with the finite humanity, suffer death! He who was rich became poor, in order that we, through his poverty, might be made rich. He emptied himself,

became of no reputation, in order that we might understand God. He made a sacrifice for sin by sacrificing himself. He was the Lamb of God, slain from before the foundation of the world; and now this divine-human Being, this Being in whom infinite truth and love and mercy are brought down to our human comprehension and engaged in the work of our salvation; this Being lived a human life, and the story of that human life is given us in the Gospels that we are to study. That life unfolded itself according to a divine plan. Our Lord had that plan in his mind at the very beginning of his ministry.

There were three different years of our Lord's ministry, each of which had its own particular purpose. To a very brief description of the three years of our Lord's ministry and the purpose of each one of those years, I wish to give a few moments this morning.

The first year of Jesus' ministry was devoted to an appeal to the authorities of Israel, an appeal to the Jewish rulers, an appeal to the constituted judges of the nation, and unless we understand this we cannot understand the first year of Jesus' work, nor the relation of that first year to the years that followed. Jesus was the King. He came first to those that were in authority, and he presented his claim to kingship. He was Jehovah. He came as Jehovah to his temple, the Messenger of the Covenant, in whom the Jews ought to have delighted, though they did not. He presented his claims as king to the constituted authorities of Israel: this was the purpose and object of his first year of ministry. During that first year, you remember, he spoke to Nicodemus, one of the rulers of the Jews. During

that year he began his ministry by miracles in the temple and by the cleansing of the temple; and during that year also, he made the acquaintance of those sisters of Bethany, and their brother Lazarus, whom he raised from the dead. The incidents of it are described not by Matthew, Mark, or Luke, but only by the apostle John.

I have spoken of this Judean ministry as occupying a year, in round numbers, as one might say. It will help our memory to divide the Saviour's ministry into three years, although those years were not exact in their beginning and their end. The first year of Jesus' ministry was really eight months instead of twelve months; and the latter portion of it, after he had been rejected by the rulers, was spent in going about with a few of his disciples, those first chosen, among the cities of Galilee, and informing them all, as it were, in regard to the purpose of his mission.

During those eight months many were baptized; so many were baptized that the attention of the Jewish rulers began to be turned from John the Baptist, because Jesus baptized more than John. Their enmity was beginning to turn from John to himself; and Jesus saw that to continue his work in Judea would be to leave unperformed his whole mission, would be to anticipate his death; for, just as they put John the Baptist to death, just so would they have put Jesus to death, two years before his time. Therefore Jesus was obliged to withdraw; and this ministry to the authorities of the people came to an end. It served his purpose; it tested them; it was a probation; they had had their offer; and now they are rejecting him

of whom Moses in the Law and the Prophets did write. The authorities of the people had turned their backs on the Son of God; the rulers rejected him; and he was compelled to leave Jerusalem.

He begins the second year of his ministry in Galilee, in the freer and broader light of northern Palestine, away from the traditional influences and the superstition of the central city, Jerusalem. The second year of our Lord's ministry was devoted to an appeal to the people at large, an appeal to the popular element among the Jews. In Galilee he begins to preach to the people rather than to the rulers; the rulers are far away. He addresses himself to the common heart of man; and that Galilean ministry begins with the choosing of the apostles upon the summit of one mount—the mount where the Sermon on the Mount was preached; and it ends with another mount—the Mount of Transfiguration. Between those two, the mount where the sermon was preached and the Mount of Transfiguration, lies the whole of the Galilean ministry. It was in Galilee rather than in Judea that his greatest miracles were wrought. It was in Galilee that the most of his parables, most of his public teaching was given. It was in Galilee that the greatest multitudes followed him. You remember it was there he fed the five thousand, and at another time the four thousand. This ministry in Galilee went on until it became perfectly evident that the great crowds that followed him were more bent upon the victuals he brought than upon the meat that endureth to everlasting life. The Jews, as a people, rejected Christ just as decisively as their rulers had done. In other words, the second year of

Christ's ministry was an unsuccessful appeal to the hearts of the people, just as the first year had been an unsuccessful appeal to the hearts of the rulers. Therefore the second year of Christ's ministry ended also. Having appealed to the rulers the first year unsuccessfully, and having appealed to the people the second year unsuccessfully, what remained? Only this, that he should now appeal to the hearts of a few loved disciples; that he should prepare them by instruction for the work which it was not appointed that he himself should do; that he should, in other words, train up the future pillars of his church, and give them his promises; draw them into intimate intercourse with himself; give them some conception of what he was; make them ready for the day of Pentecost, when they would be endowed with power from on high; and prepare them to go forth to all the world and preach his gospel.

If I am not mistaken, if you will take the Gospels and read them with these subdivisions in mind that I have given you, you will get a great deal of light upon the meaning of Christ's teaching and of Christ's wonderful works. The first year is a year of appeal to the hierarchy, to the rulers; the second year is a year of appeal to the people; and the third year is a year of appeal to his disciples.

In the latter part of Jesus' life, you will find that the instruction becomes more esoteric, it becomes more intimate. Jesus lets his disciples into the secret of his life. Jesus, after they have confessed that he is the Son of God, after they have seen his glory on the Mount of Transfiguration, tells them that he must be rejected by the scribes and Pharisees and must be

crucified. He goes down from that mount of glory, where the voice had spoken to him from on high, and takes his way to Jerusalem to suffer; and he goes with such a majestic mien that the disciples following him are amazed and afraid. So the glory was only the prelude to the suffering, and Jesus showed that he came into this world to die. He came, not so much to teach as he did to die; and this death of Christ, which we celebrate in the ordinances of the Church, this death was the one great act of self-limitation and self-sacrifice which the Son of God came to accomplish in this world. In other words, the death was the culmination of the life; and it was for the sake of that death that he lived here at all. So we find that, in the Gospels, fully one-third of each narrative is taken up with the incidents and events connected with the crucifixion or immediately leading to it, and only perhaps two-thirds, or one-half, of all is devoted to the preliminary life of Christ and his preliminary teaching. So, we have an infinite life lived within the limitations of humanity; and we have that infinite life teaching man, appealing to man, rejected by man, and then prepared to die; and only as we have that view of the life of Christ, the infinite within the bounds of the finite, the infinite finally giving up life itself for the finite, have we any proper conception of the life of Jesus Christ. We are to study Christ in order that we may be like him; and I do not know of any way in which we can learn of Christ, except by reading these accounts of Christ which are given us in the Gospels.

Having thus given you some general idea of what that life was, we shall come next Sunday to the

consideration of the Gospels themselves; what they are, what their relations are one to another, what the distinguishing characteristics are of each; and how it was that, in the providence of God, they grew, they originated, they came to be what we have them to-day.

THE GOSPELS AND THEIR ORIGIN

I AM to speak to-day of the origin of the Gospels, and some of their characteristics. There can be no doubt that an oral account, an account of the life and teachings and works of Jesus Christ that passed from mouth to mouth, was the basis of our present Gospels. Indeed, it is quite certain that from twenty to forty years passed before the Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, and Luke were written down. During those twenty to forty years the story of each of these Gospels had been current in quite another way. It had been communicated *viva voce,* by the living voice. This ought not to surprise us. The truth is, that the apostles were primarily teachers and only secondarily writers.

There were multitudes of converts from the Jews and from the Gentiles. This multitude of converts had to be instructed, and instruction in those days was almost wholly by word of mouth. There was not only preaching, but teaching; and this preaching and teaching was all personal communication of one individual to another. You remember that the Sanhedrin commanded Peter and John no more to preach or teach in this name. They put no prohibition upon them in regard to writing. Paul taught publicly and from house to house. We read nothing at all about his writing at that time.

The multitude of those who came into the Christian

church needed just this personal and direct instruction; and the memory was strong in those days, stronger probably than in these days when we trust so much more to books. The Jews, you know, could repeat endless genealogies. Those very things which might seem most difficult to remember they had deeply impressed upon their minds; and then, they not only had the most vivid recollection of the words of Jesus, their Lord, and of those wonderful three years they had passed in intimate intercourse with him, but it was their delight to speak forth the things they had seen and heard; and, if there ever was a lapse of memory, they had the wonderful promise of the assistance of the Holy Spirit, who was to bring to their remembrance all these things with regard to Christ, so that they might speak of the things of Christ and show them to others.

It is not wonderful that the apostles were primarily teachers; and in their teaching there must have been continual repetition. If we should judge the teaching of those times by our modern standard, we should make the greatest possible mistake. A modern teacher would think it was a very monotonous thing for him to say over and over again, in almost precisely the same words, the lesson he had to teach; but this was not only a common thing among the Jews, but we can almost say that it was the only possible thing. They had, you recollect, the Old Testament Scriptures. But there were very few who knew how to read, and the most of the knowledge the people had with regard to these Scriptures was what they had gained from the public reading of them. So, over and over again,

the stories of the Old Testament were repeated; and when the New Testament history came to be proclaimed, it naturally was proclaimed in the same way. There was no prejudice against the continual repetition of the old, old story with regard to Jesus and his love.

But there was naturally a selection going on all the while. It was said by John in his Gospel that the world would not contain the things that would be written if everything were written out. It is very plain that, in the memory of the apostles, there was a great deal that it was not thought best by them or by the Holy Spirit should be put down permanently; and it was not desirable that there should be a record of the life of Christ so large and cumbersome that it would break down with its own weight. It was desirable that just those scenes and just those teachings of the Saviour should be selected that were most central and vital, in order that the Gospel record, when at last it was made up, should be just as simple, just as compact, just as brief as it could possibly be, consistently with giving the essential facts with regard to the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.

So there was a continual process of selection going on. Those things that were most representative in Christ's teachings came to be more and more insisted upon, and the things that were merely incidental began to have less and less attention paid to them; and then, as there were different classes of hearers, the truth that was adapted to that particular class was chosen in speaking to them. In that way there grew up certain types of apostolic doctrine. One apostle, having a different mental constitution and being prepared

more easily to recognize certain portions of the truth than another apostle was, would make his selection of the incidents of the life and teachings of Christ and would have *his* way of presenting the truth; and another apostle would have *his* way of presenting the truth. And, while there was an agreement with regard to a great many things, there was no agreement as to what they should write. You find, in fact, with regard to the words of Christ, the reverence of the disciples for the Master's words seems, many times, to preserve exactly the same form of words in the narrative of each of the Evangelists, while, at the same time, the circumstances, the setting, the frame-work varies in many of its particulars—the one giving one sort of incident connected with the teachings, and another giving another sort of incident connected with the teachings, so that one supplements the other.

There was thus growing up all the while, during those twenty to forty years, in the case of the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, what you may call a stereotyped narrative, a gradual paring down, removing of what was adventitious, putting aside the things that were merely incidental, selecting the things that were important; so that all three of the Evangelists agreed in all the main lines of teaching. In fact, there is absolute verbal agreement with regard to a great many things; yet, at the same time, each one has his own point of view, has his own hearers, persons for whom he is writing, persons whom he has in mind as the object of his discourse. So we have growing up a sort of gospel or account of the Saviour's life all oral at first, which is marked by the two characteristics

of substantial agreement, and yet a wonderful individuality and independence.

The problem of the origin of the Gospels is one of the most interesting, one of the most subtle, one of the most difficult in all human history; and yet, after all, I think that these conclusions which I have tried to draw are manifestly demonstrable. They explain the facts of the case.

This oral basis, this extemporary narrative, this living account that was handed from mouth to mouth was not at first put into writing at all; in fact, there was no disposition to write. The apostles had no time to write; they were not used to writing. The literary instinct was by no means so general then as it is now. As the rabbis reiterated over and over again the same things with regard to the law, the learned did not need books, and the common people did not want them; so, in the case of these New Testament accounts, every one was contented for a very long time to have them simply pass from mouth to mouth.

Yet we find that, little by little, there came to be felt the need of putting these accounts into writing. At first, the apostles apparently expected that Christ was soon to come and put an end to all things. This might have made it seem unnecessary to spend time in writing documents. But we find that Peter, at last, begins to speak of his decease; and, as he sees the time of the end approaching, and feels the needs of the churches over which he had care, he says, "I will take care that you may have these things in remembrance." In other words, it seems as if there were an intimation that it was his purpose to put into permanent form the

substance of his teaching, so that it could subsist and remain after he was taken away. And Paul, who, in his letter to the Thessalonians, had at first the surmise that the coming of the Lord was near at hand, afterward recognized the fact that Christ's coming was to take place after his day; and he speaks of "having fought the good fight, having finished his course." He is now "ready to be offered," and he tells very plainly of his expectation of approaching death. He was to die before the coming of the Lord.

It was as the apostles were passing away from the scene of action, and were no longer able to give their oral testimony, that they made sure of a written testimony that could be left forever to the church of Christ. So we find the gradual growing up of the Gospels, and what was oral becomes written.

It has been thought by some, in fact it is a very early tradition, that Matthew wrote a Gospel in Hebrew. If Matthew did write a Gospel in Hebrew, which was afterward translated into Greek, and the Hebrew original was lost, it is probable that this Hebrew original, containing the sayings of Jesus, which were the nucleus and basis of our Matthew, was the earliest of all, and may be dated A. D. 50. Mark, you know, is said to have been the interpreter of Peter; and Mark's Gospel must have been composed somewhere near the year 55 of our era, and twenty-five years at least after the death of our Lord. Matthew's Greek Gospel, as we have it now, comes a little later, perhaps in the year 58.

Luke, you remember, at the beginning of his Gospel speaks of certain attempts that have been made by others to put down incidents in the life of Christ and

to compose a partial history; and he expresses his purpose of putting down in order the things of which he has become credibly informed. He may have in mind the work of Mark and of Matthew, and I put the Gospel according to Luke in the year 59.

So we have the synoptic writers; and by the synoptic writers I mean Matthew, Mark, and Luke; called synoptic because, in the early history of the church, a synopsis was made of the three, the three being so parallel with one another that you could easily form a single narrative by combining them all together.

The synoptic writers probably composed their Gospels between the years 55 and 60, so that all of the three were written before the destruction of Jerusalem; and while the oral Gospels become written, you find that there is no evidence whatever that any one of these Gospels was composed in view of the others; not one of the Gospels was consciously an attempt to supplement another; not one of them was written for the purpose of correcting what was written in another; not one of them was written with the express purpose of adapting the other narrative to a new class of hearers; but it would seem that each narrative was written by itself, each witness was independent, each gathered his material in his own way, each put it down in his own form. Yet, notwithstanding this independence, there is a wonderful harmony: harmony as to substance and harmony in a great many respects in verbal expression, between each Gospel and the others. I speak now in regard to the first three Gospels.

Then, in regard to the Gospel according to John, which differs so remarkably from all three (Matthew,

Mark, and Luke), it is perfectly evident that John wrote independently. He did not intend simply to supplement what the others had written, because he included the account of the feeding of the five thousand; this as a text to which he might attach Jesus' discourse with regard to himself as the Bread of Life. He did not write in ignorance of what was written before, because he does not include the account of the transfiguration, which he certainly would have included if he had not known what Matthew, Mark, and Luke had written.

So we have the gradual growth of our Gospels from the oral to the written form, at first in a sort of oral account, passing from mouth to mouth, repeated with very slight variations, as the sacred oracles of the Lord, and existing in that form from twenty to forty years; and after that time put into written form before the apostles died. Then, after the expiration of thirty years more, John the Evangelist, in Asia Minor, writes down his account of the life of Christ and adds many things, together with chronological data, that were not given by the three Evangelists who had written before. So much now with regard to the problem of the origin of the Gospels.

I want to speak now, as the second and concluding portion of these remarks, of the characteristics of the Gospels. I have spoken of their diversity. This diversity is diversity in unity; but let us first get an idea of what this diversity is.

Matthew first of all is the publican, the collector of taxes or customs. He is a practised writer, just because of his profession, perhaps the most practised

writer of them all, and, therefore, perhaps the first and the most ready to enter upon this work of committing the gospel to writing. Matthew puts down his account of the life of Christ from his own point of view and for a particular sort of hearers. And who are these hearers, the persons whom he has in view as he writes? Why, it is the Jews. He would convert the Jews to Christ; and so he speaks of Christ as the Son of David and the Son of Abraham, the heir to the Old Testament promises. He speaks of Christ as the King of Israel, who has been foretold by the prophets of old. He also speaks of Christ as the suffering Messiah, in whom all the sacrificial types of the Old Testament found their fulfilment. Matthew has for his symbol, in early Christian history, the sacrificial bullock. You know the four figures of the cherubim were taken as symbols of the Evangelists; and of those cherubic figures, the sacrificial bullock was assigned to Matthew, as indicating the fact that Matthew more than all the other Evangelists sets forth Jesus Christ as the King of Israel, who was, at the same time, the Messiah offered for human sins. That is the main characteristic of Matthew. He speaks of Christ as the sacrificed Son of God. Now the sacrificed King of Israel was the Old Testament Messiah; so, you remember, the Gospel according to Matthew begins with the genealogies, and those genealogies are intended to connect the New Testament with the Old.

Mark has in his mind an entirely different class of hearers, and who are they? Why, Mark writes to the Romans. Mark is the interpreter of Peter; Mark has in him something of the vivid, vigorous, picturesque

spirit that belonged to Peter. Mark is writing for the rulers of the world, for men who have great homage for law. And so you find that Mark represents Christ in that aspect which was most likely to impress the minds of the Romans, as the wonder-worker, the worker of miracles, stirring the depths of men's hearts by his demonstrations of divine power; and so the symbol that has been assigned to Mark, in early Christian archæology, is the powerful lion. Mark goes straight to his mark. Mark never wastes time in detail. Mark is picturesque and incisive; and there is a strength and a grasp in his Gospel. Although the shortest of them all, it is in some respects the most vigorous and powerful of them all.

Luke, in the third place, writes, not for the Jews nor for the Romans, but for the Greeks. Luke is the physician. Luke is the man of scientific spirit. It is remarkable that every description of disease given us by Luke in his Gospel is just such as would naturally proceed from the brain and pen of a physician. Luke is probably the most learned of all the Evangelists. He writes with an elaborateness and beauty of Greek style. Luke's preface is more like classical Greek than any other Greek we find in the New Testament. Now, Luke, writing for the Greeks, with his breadth of mind and his sense of human need, speaks of Christ as the friend of humanity, the humane Saviour. You find that those wonderful parables of the Prodigal Son and the Lost Piece of Money, and many others of a similar sort, are found in Luke, and not in the other Evangelists. Luke is said to have been the interpreter or representative of Paul, just as Mark was the repre-

sentative or interpreter of Peter; and the image or symbol of Luke, in Christian archæology, has been the human form. You know that among the cherubic figures—the figures that constitute the cherubim—there was the bullock which answered to Matthew, the lion which answered to Mark, the eagle which answered to John, and then the man which answered to Luke; so that we have in these cherubic figures the symbols of all four of the Evangelists.

And now, finally, you have John. John writes not for Jews, not for Romans, not for Greeks; he covers the whole world and writes for all men; for, with his loving and ardent spirit, his fiery nature, and yet his habit of introspection, he apprehends, as none other of the Evangelists do, the greatness and glory of Christ's divine nature. So he takes us back to the very beginning, before all time, and speaks of the Word which was with God, and was God. John gives us the most beautiful exhibition of the lofty, the divine element in Jesus Christ, our Lord; so that the symbol that has been assigned to John is the soaring eagle that flies to the heights of heaven, while its eye pierces with its vision to the very depths of the sea.

These are the general characteristics of the Evangelists. Each one had his own nature, each one had his own point of view, each one had his own audience, so to speak; and they give us a picture of the life of Christ that we never could get from any single one alone. Here, then, there is diversity; but let me bring you back again to the idea of the unity in diversity. That is just as wonderful as the diversity itself. Jesus was many-sided. You know it has been said of Shake-

speare that he was myriad-minded. If Shakespeare could be called myriad-minded, what epithet could be applied to Christ? Why, there are no ends or sides to Christ's nature. Human intellect cannot perceive the whole of him at once. You cannot possibly see the two poles, even of a globe, at one time. You must turn one pole toward you first, and then remove that from sight, in order that you may see the other. So it was utterly impossible for any single human being to see the whole of Christ. The only way in which the world could be got to look upon Christ, in his true light, was by getting a number to look at him from different sides, and then to combine their stories.

It is said that in Paris there is a sculptor who makes statues and busts of celebrated men, and his method of making them is this: He has a circular apartment, around the circumference of which a dozen photographic cameras are stationed, all pointing toward the center. He has the subject, of whom he is to make the statue or bust, sit or stand in the center of the apartment; the lights are all properly arranged, and at a certain moment the curtain is removed from each one of the cameras. A dozen different pictures from a dozen different points of view are taken at the same instant, and the sculptor makes up his statue or his bust from all these pictures combined; so that the result is true to the original, as a single view never could make it.

Now, these four Evangelists have stationed their photographic cameras on four different sides of our Lord Jesus Christ, and they have taken their pictures from different points of view; and, in order properly

to understand what Christ was, we must, from all these four narratives, construct a solid and symmetrical structure of his life. If this be true, a great deal of light is thrown upon the problem, which to some has seemed almost insoluble, how it is that the first three Evangelists can give us such a different view from that which is given us in the Gospel according to John. Why, it is the most natural thing in the world. Cicero says, "The eye sees only that which it brings with it the power of seeing." Every man sees another out of his own eye, and gets a view of that other that no other person ever does get; and so the life of Christ appeared from different points of view to different persons.

Those of you who have been abroad, those of you who have visited the picture-galleries of Europe, know very well that there is no subject of which the representations are so astonishingly various as those of Venice. The pictures of Venice, how wonderfully they differ! There are the pictures of Canaletto, in which the drawing is perfect. It is as exact as a photograph. You almost seem to be put back into one of the gondolas on the Venetian canals. Every line is perfectly distinct. But side by side with this picture, by Canaletto, there is a picture of Venice by Turner. What an astonishing difference there is! Here you have not so much clearness of outline as you have wonderful light and shade. There is a roseate glow over the whole picture that is marvelous. It seems as if Venice were transfigured, almost as if it were the New Jerusalem; and yet Turner painted Venice just as truly as Canaletto did. So, John painted Christ just as truly as Matthew, or Mark, or Luke ever painted him. John

had the seeing eye, John had the glowing heart, John had the deep love that enabled him to see in his Lord the heavenly and the divine.

We have in ancient literature also a remarkable illustration. Some have wondered whether there ever could have been such a man as Socrates, simply because we have two accounts of him—the one by Plato and the other by Xenophon—which widely differ. Shall we say that there never was such a man as Socrates, simply because these two speak of him so differently? Shall we say that there was no such a personage as Jesus Christ, simply because John speaks of him so differently from the first three Evangelists? There is no contradiction at all between them. It is simply that each one sees that which he brings with him the power of seeing; in these separate portraits we have, with all these diversities, a wonderful harmony of personality. This composite picture is the representation of a majestic person, such as never lived anywhere else upon the earth. There is no representation of any human being that can compare with this representation of Jesus. The separate portraits only differ in the aspect from which they regard him. How wonderful it is that this harmony exists, a harmony that shows there is no collusion between them, and which makes the testimony of one witness confirm that of the others. In the courts of law the testimony of one may be something; but if you get the testimony of another, side by side with his, it is plain that one and one do not simply make two, but that one plus one makes four. So these two Evangelists, Matthew and Mark, plus the two Evangelists Luke and John, do not make simply four.

Two plus two do not equal four here; they make sixteen. So we have a gospel that grew up in a wonderful way into solidity and symmetry, and is given to us now only after the most complete witness to its truth by combined apostolic authority.

In conclusion, let me say that these Gospels are not, as some have supposed, a jotting down of mere tradition. What do you mean by tradition? Why, we mean by tradition that which is handed down after the death of the witnesses. A thing does not become tradition until the witnesses are dead. Now, were these things written long after the witnesses were dead, so that we can say that we have simply tradition put down here? That is the doctrine of Robert Elsmere. What a mistake it is! These things were written down while the witnesses were yet living. The men who wrote them, in more than one case, had seen the Lord Jesus; and they put down what they knew before they passed away from the scene of action. That is not tradition. That is simply a settled statement upon which they have agreed, after pondering it over in their minds, after throwing out the things that were simply incidental and of no account, after concluding what was the truth, and what was the exact way in which they ought to express it.

There is another thing that is very remarkable, and that is this, that the apostles, by teaching, learned how to tell their story. During these twenty to forty years in which the gospel existed simply in an oral form, and was repeated day by day to new hearers, the apostles learned how to tell their story in exact accordance with the facts; and speakers and hearers mutually helped

and corrected one another. At last the whole narrative, as it was exhibited in the Gospels, came to be the settled and permanent testimony of the apostles; not something taken up by chance, not something taken by a stenographer as it happened to be uttered, but the settled story upon which they had concluded as to substance and as to expression, after from twenty to forty years of a continuous utterance, for which they were willing to lay down their lives. So we have things that are absolutely certain to us, because they were not the utterances of simply temporary interpreters, but were the settled convictions and beliefs of the apostolic witnesses. This, then, is the origin of the Gospels, and these are their main characteristics.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

THE stream that flowed from the Garden of Eden, we are told, was parted into four heads; and so the water of life comes to us through four Gospel channels. It is the first of these, the Gospel according to Matthew, the Gospel of sacrifice, to which I call your attention to-day.

The writer of this Gospel is Matthew. Matthew was not his original name. His name was Levi, instead. In Mark and Luke no other name is given to him but this. It seems to have been a case of change of name at a particular epoch in his life; just as Saul, when he was converted to Christ, changed his name to Paul; and just as Simon, when he made his great confession, became Peter; and so a change of heart, a change of purpose, a change of life was indicated that made him a new man. It would seem as if Levi's following Christ was the time when his name too was changed, and Levi became Matthew. Levi would signify "servant of the Lord"; Matthew would signify "the Lord's free man."

Levi was a publican; and by publican, in those days, was meant not innkeeper, but rather receiver of public taxes, a tax-gatherer. He was a tax-gatherer under Herod Antipas. Something of contempt attached itself to this calling of a tax-gatherer, at least under the circumstances under which Matthew attempted it. As tax-gatherer he had probably acquired a large knowl-

edge of human nature. He had acquired accurate business habits, and, more than that, I suppose we may say that he had acquired practice in writing; so it is possible that Matthew was the earliest of those who composed a Gospel; and it is quite possible that the logical and philosophical grouping of his Gospel may evince the grasp and skill which he had acquired.

Matthew was a humble man. He calls himself Matthew the Publican; as if always to remember the low degree from which he had sprung; as if to call attention to the fact that it was a strange and wonderful thing that the Lord had ever set his love upon him. He not only calls himself so, but he avoids all mention of any particular qualification in him for his work. Matthew was probably a man of means. Luke tells us that, after he was called to be a disciple, he made a great feast to Jesus; but Matthew himself makes no mention of it.

Matthew is distinguished by what we call self-effacement. He ignores himself continually. He makes as little mention of himself as John does, even less than John does; for, although John does not mention his own name, John does speak of a certain disciple whom Jesus loved that can be no other than John. After the first calling of Matthew, and the relating of that incident by which he became a disciple of Jesus, there is absolutely no mention of Matthew, except his mere name in the list of the apostles; and thus we get the impression that he is a man of great humility, that he merges himself in Christ, and thinks there is nothing worthy to be mentioned of himself.

We know little about Matthew during our Saviour's

life, and we know almost next to nothing of his work after the Saviour's death. Tradition says he went to Ethiopia, preached the gospel there, and suffered martyrdom, being slain while engaged in prayer. Even this tradition is denied by some, especially by Clement of Alexandria; so we may say that we know almost nothing about Matthew, except that he was a publican, a humble man, the author of this Gospel.

Yet this humble disciple of Christ, this apostle who never cared to have his own name mentioned, has become the first of the Evangelists; just as that Mary, from whom Christ cast out seven demons, was the first to announce the gospel of the resurrection to the apostles. It is a blessed thought to me that the names of these apostles, who so merged themselves in Christ and his kingdom as to be lost sight of entirely, the names of these twelve apostles, every one, are to be written on the foundation-stones of the New Jerusalem; so that, although they got no honor upon the earth, they will get the honor that comes from God only.

Now in regard to the language in which this Gospel is written. There is a dispute in regard to this matter, as to whether the original writing of it was in Hebrew or in Greek. Here we come to a problem of very great interest. I cannot go into it at length. I can only indicate to you the nature of it. It is the unanimous testimony of the early church that Matthew wrote originally in Hebrew, "wrote a Gospel in the Hebrew language which every one interpreted," i. e., I suppose, every one translated into Greek, "as he was able to"; and it is of additional interest that, at the time

Matthew wrote, there was already existing a Greek translation, for the word "interpreted" is a Greek word, and intimates that people heretofore interpreted the Gospel as they were able; but, now that the Greek translation existed, there was no need any longer of this individual interpretation.

Those who hold this view are themselves divided into two different parties. One of them holds that the original Gospel, written by Matthew in Hebrew, was very brief, much briefer than our present Gospel; and that, subsequently, with the aid of the oral tradition which then existed, Matthew himself wrote a Greek translation, enlarging it as he wrote, so that our present Greek Gospel is a translation of the briefer original Gospel written by Matthew himself. Those who hold this view think that the earlier Hebrew Gospel was corrupted, and that it became the Apocryphal book which is entitled the Gospel of the Hebrews.

There is a difficulty connected with this hypothesis that the Gospel was originally written in Hebrew, which makes it doubtful whether we ought to accept it, even although we have in its favor the almost unanimous tradition of the early church. The difficulty is just this: Whenever Matthew, in his Greek Gospel, quotes from the Old Testament, in giving us the words of Christ, he quotes not from the Hebrew, but from the Greek; and it would seem very strange, if he were writing a Hebrew Gospel, that he should not quote from the original Hebrew instead. Again, when Matthew gives us the words of Christ, he gives us almost always the same words which we find in the other synoptic Gospels, gives us the words of Christ very much as

they are given us by Mark and by Luke. This would seem very strange, if the Gospel which we have now was translated from an original Hebrew Gospel.

We cannot understand this argument fully, unless we remember that, in those days, the art of translation had not reached the perfection which it reaches now. In our day, when a man who has any scholarship at all attempts a translation from Greek into English, he does not translate word for word; he does not simply transfer the words of the Greek into the words of the English, but he puts the thought of the original into English thought, and into English idioms. But in those days the art of translation was by no means perfected, and whatever translation there was, was really transference instead of translation; and if our present Greek version were the translation of an original Hebrew, we should expect to find the Hebrew idioms continually recurrent; we should find a great difference in the words of Christ as they appear in our Gospel according to Matthew, and the words of Christ as they appear in the Gospels according to Mark and Luke. There is, however, no such difference, so that the internal evidence, in spite of this external evidence from the early church Fathers, seems to point to an original Greek Gospel rather than an original Hebrew Gospel. The explanation of Westcott is that Matthew himself translated the Hebrew Gospel into Greek; that, when he came to those portions that were common to him and to Mark and Luke, he took the Greek oral tradition that was current, side by side with the Hebrew tradition, and substituted that for what he had originally written in the Hebrew.

This is a possible solution of the difficulty, and I am still inclined to believe there was an original Hebrew Gospel, perhaps briefer than our present Gospel according to Matthew, which was subsequently translated by Matthew himself, and, in the translation, was enlarged. The Fathers seem with one accord to have accepted this view, and this unanimous assent of the early church cannot rest upon the testimony of that single man Papias, for Papias, we know, was not overcritical. They must have had other and better evidence.

The truth is that, in Palestine, at the time of Christ, there were two languages spoken. Palestine was a bilingual country. The Aramaic, or corrupted Hebrew, was the language of the common people, because that was the language of the original Scriptures. On the other hand, Greek was the literary language, and every one learned something of Greek. Every man of affairs, every business man had to know something of Greek. There is a similar state of things in Wales in our own day. The language of the people in Wales, of course, is Welsh; and as a Welshman, a Welsh carpenter, once said: "I learned English in school, and I am perfectly familiar with English, but I never talk a word of English except when I am speaking with English people. In my family and in my business in the village, and, in fact, almost universally, I speak nothing but Welsh. I read English, but I speak Welsh."

I suppose that in Palestine, at the time of Christ, the people spoke Aramaic and they read Greek; and, when it came to putting the gospel into permanent and written form, it was naturally the Greek, the literary language, into which the Gospels were put, rather than

into the Hebrew or Aramaic, which was the language commonly spoken. I suppose it is perfectly certain that our Lord used the Greek language in his replies to Pilate, the Roman governor; but I suppose it is equally true that, in prayer, in his utterances from the cross, he used the Aramaic, the language of the common people.

It is a very curious thing in regard to Germans that come to our country, that they may use nothing but English in their business, speak English every day, but, as Christians, they never pray except in German, their mother tongue; and, when they come to die, their last words are spoken in German, and not in English.

So it was in Palestine. The Jewish language, the language of the heart, the sacred language, was Aramaic or Hebrew; but the literary language, the language of the books, was Greek. So you find that James, one of the earliest Epistles written, was written in Greek, although James was a Hebrew. And so you find that the Epistle to the Hebrews, written to Jewish Christians most of all, is written in Greek, and betrays no signs of an original Hebrew. I think it is not only perfectly natural, but it is probably a conclusion warranted by the circumstances, that our Greek Gospel is now what it was when it left the hands of Matthew, the apostle.

Another question arises with regard to the date at which this Gospel was written. I have concluded that the most probable date is between the years 55 and 60, or, if we must be more definite, about A. D. 58, twelve years before the destruction of Jerusalem.

We have the testimony of Irenæus, one of the

church Fathers, that the Gospel according to Matthew was written while the apostles Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome, i. e., just before their martyrdom; and there is a great deal in the Gospel itself which indicates that it must have been written before the time of the destruction of Jerusalem. There is no hint, for example, that Jerusalem had been destroyed, as there almost certainly would have been if the holy city had been overthrown; and while our Saviour's words in regard to the flight of Christians, on account of the approaching calamity, are still retained in the Gospel, there is no sort of indication that their flight had already taken place. When our Saviour's discourse is given, in which the prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world merge into one another, there is no dividing line drawn, as there very naturally would be if a part of that prophecy had already been fulfilled. And when it is said, "This generation shall not pass until all these things be fulfilled," it would certainly seem that, if that prophecy had been fulfilled already, there would have been some mark or indication that the Lord's words had been verified.

Yet there are those who, simply because these prophecies are so clear and unmistakable, are inclined to doubt whether this Gospel was written before the events had taken place. Of course these difficulties all arise from a wrong view of inspiration. They fancy that there was no such thing as prediction, that man cannot be inspired by God to prophesy the future. If that be true, then the Gospel must have been written after the destruction of Jerusalem rather than before;

but to us who believe that God knows from the beginning, and that God prophesied and predicted what was to happen, such an argument has no weight; in fact, these words of objection are fraught with other difficulties just as serious, for Christ himself declared these things. Christ himself declared that the temple was to be destroyed, and that, in three days, it would be raised again.

There was a foretelling of the destruction of Jerusalem long before the apostolic testimony. The predictions of the apostles were only an echo of the prophecy of Daniel that had been spoken four or five hundred years before, viz., "The people of the Prince shall come and destroy the city and the sanctuary"; so we cannot get rid of the element of prediction that is there. Putting the Gospel after the destruction of Jerusalem cannot help the matter at all.

In fact, we find that it must have been before that event. There is a limit as to the point of time later than which the Gospel cannot have been written. It must have come before the destruction of Jerusalem; and yet there is a limit on the other side. It cannot be so very much before the destruction of Jerusalem. You remember that, in Matthew's Gospel, there is the story about the bribing of the soldiers who had watched at the tomb of Jesus. They were bribed to say that the disciples had come and stolen away the body of Jesus; and Matthew adds: "And this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day." He could not have put in these words unless a considerable interval of time had elapsed since the resurrection of Christ. The time during which the Gospel could have

been composed must therefore be narrowed down to a space somewhere between the years 50 and 60, or even between 55 and 60, when there was yet time to warn Christ's disciples of the impending destruction of the sacred city. Let us tentatively call the date A. D. 58.

Now, something with regard to the object of the Gospel. Why was it that Matthew wrote? What has been said with regard to the language, and with regard to the date, may help us in determining the question why Matthew wrote his Gospel. What was the main object he had in view? You can see that, if the Gospel was written at the time I suppose, there was already the shadow of approaching destruction and desolation gathering about the "holy city." Those who had been accustomed to go into the temple to worship were now about to be cast out from the temple; many among those Jewish Christians were tempted to question whether they would not be subject to a vast and irreparable loss. In view of this approaching calamity it was desirable that the Christian heart should be strengthened. In view of the scattering of the Jewish people it was desirable that the Gospel should be put into permanent and written form, as it never had been before; and, therefore, Matthew began to write.

There were two things which he might do to strengthen Christian hearts, and to prepare them for the times of suffering and trouble before them; and the first of them was to show them that this Saviour, in whom they had believed, was an Almighty Saviour,

that he was the King of Israel, that he was the promised Messiah; and it is to this point that Matthew first directs his attention.

He gives us historical proof that Jesus of Nazareth is the King of Israel; he therefore begins with the genealogies, and proves from public records that Jesus is the lineal descendant of David and Abraham, the son of David and the son of Abraham, and that he is heir to all the promises that were made to the fathers. He is of the line of the kings; for the genealogy given us in Matthew, I think, is the royal genealogy; it is the line of Jewish kings; and Matthew aims to show that Jesus is heir to the throne of David and to the hereditary blessing of Abraham. This proof that Jesus, the carpenter, was the appointed and foretold King of Israel, would tend to strengthen the heart of every Jewish Christian, and make him stand by Christ, no matter what trial and trouble might come.

But there was another thing that Matthew had in mind, and this brings into view the essential purpose of his Gospel. You know that, in the Old Testament, there were prophecies of two sorts with regard to Christ. There had been the prophecy that Jesus should be the King of Israel, and there should arise one who should be the heir of David's throne, who should have power and glory and sovereignty. One class of predictions was of this sort. Then, there had been another sort of prophecy, which the Jews had never been able to combine with the first, viz., that there was to be a suffering Messiah. The natural hopes and feelings of the people had clustered about the first class of prophecies; but the second class of prophecies they had

almost entirely ignored. So we find, in the Jewish people, a wide-spread expectation of a deliverer, a king who is to come in power and great glory; but as for believing that that king was also to be the Messiah who was to suffer and die, that thought they never permitted to enter into their minds.

Now, it is Matthew's purpose to show that the two sorts of predictions related to one single person; that this promised King of Israel was the same individual as he who was to suffer for the sins of men. In other words, the promised son of David and son of Abraham was also the suffering Messiah; the High Priest of God's people was to reconcile Israel by sacrificing himself. The Gospel according to Matthew shows that this King of Israel has suffered and died for man; has accomplished his work of atonement; and, in spite of his low origin, and in spite of his humiliation and death, the Christian must look to him as the appointed Saviour of the world.

If you look into the Gospel according to Matthew, and read it through with this in mind, you will get an entirely new view of its meaning. It is the Gospel of rejection, and the Gospel according to Luke is the Gospel of acceptance. People wonder, in Luke, at the gracious words that proceed out of the Saviour's mouth. That side, that aspect of the Saviour, comes into view; but in Matthew there is one long undertone of mourning, one long undertone of sorrow. All through the Gospel of Matthew Jesus is represented as rejected of men.

Mary is rejected and cast out at the beginning. Herod pursues the young child. Joseph has to flee into

Egypt, from the wrath of the king. When he comes back he cannot go to the native place of Jesus, but has to withdraw to Nazareth. Jesus is driven from place to place, until at last he goes to his crucifixion. You find that there is a representation of the crucifixion, of the sorrowful sacrifice, as there is not in any of the other Evangelists.

The Sanhedrin, the appointed authorities of the Jews, rejected Christ. He is cast out by his own people in Galilee; and, at last, when Pilate crucified him, he says, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." In other words, the king is a rejected king. The promised King is also the suffering Messiah; and the deepest note of sorrow and sacrifice is struck when God himself forsakes his Son upon the cross, and Jesus Christ, in his agony, cries, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

The Gospel according to Matthew, then, is the Gospel of rejection; it is the Gospel of sorrow; it is the Gospel of sacrifice; it is the proof that the expected King and Messiah of Israel is the appointed ransom for sinners; it is intended to show to those who might be staggering over this fact that this is the very fulfilment of prophecy, the very proof that Jesus' work is a fulfilment of God's eternal plan of redemption. The Gospel according to Matthew, then, is the Gospel of sacrifice; but you must remember that sacrifice involved death, and that death is followed by resurrection. We find the founding of the new covenant, and the spread of the gospel through all the world, predicted in the closing verses of the Gospel of Matthew. Matthew's sacrifice is "Sacrifice, out of which joy and triumph

have come"; and it is only in Matthew that you have the command, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." The central thought of the Gospel is indicated in those words in which Christ instituted the Lord's Supper: "This is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins"; in other words, a new covenant is now established, in place of the old covenant, by the blood of Jesus; so that Matthew furnishes the proper transition from the Old Testament to the New, and shows how the old covenant is merged in the new covenant, the new covenant of grace and mercy to mankind, through the blood of Christ.

One or two words with regard to the structure of this Gospel. We can understand this very much better, now that we have the leading thought. The childhood of Jesus is related; and then the Gospel is divided into two great parts: First, our Saviour's ministerial work in Galilee; and, secondly, his preparation for the crucifixion. Two great parts, I repeat—the one having to do with his official life in Galilee, and the second with regard to his preparation for the crucifixion.

The first of these parts answers to what I have called the second year of the Saviour's ministry; and the second part answers to what I have called the third year of the Saviour's ministry—the ministry of Jesus in Judea not being described at all by Matthew. We have, then, the official life of the Saviour in Galilee described first of all, and, as a preface, Jesus' baptism. Secondly, we have the preparation for the crucifixion described, and the preface to that is the account of the transfiguration.

There are many evidences of structure in Matthew's Gospel; it has a plan; read it with a view to this and I think you will be greatly struck by its order and system.

The first part of the Gospel, the account of Christ's official life in Galilee, is prefaced by the narrative of his baptism; but it is also prefaced by the announcement, "from this time, Jesus began to preach that the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

The second great division, the preparation for his crucifixion, is prefaced in a similar way by words that remind us of the first: "From this time, Jesus began to show unto his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem to suffer many things from the chief priests"; and this preface predicts his sacrifice, and, after his death, his rising on the third day. So we have a preface to the first part, and a preface to the second part.

After the preface to the first part, we have a sermon, the Sermon on the Mount, the giving out of the law of the new covenant; and just so, when we come to the second part, after this announcement that I have spoken of, we have another sermon to the disciples, on humility. As the first sermon was the laying out of the law of his kingdom for all men, so the second part of the Gospel has its sermon and discourse to the disciples themselves, on humility.

Then, in the first part, as the sermon is followed by a series of miracles, and a growth of power, showing that Jesus has the authority to speak; so, in the second part, we have, after the sermon on humility, another series of miracles. In the first part we have that series of miracles followed by parables, a dozen or more of

them; and, in the second part, we have its miracles followed by prophecies.

It is impossible to go into this more minutely, because I should burden your minds. I can only hint at these evidences of structure in the Gospel. A great trouble with us, in our reading of the Gospels, is that we read them without looking beneath the surface. We do not analyze and divide the Gospel into its different parts, as we should. We would enjoy our reading very much more if we made an analysis of the whole; and here, in the Gospel according to Matthew, we would find marvelous evidences of structure.

Matthew differs from Mark most palpably in this, that while Mark relates things in chronological order, Matthew finds the thought of much more importance than the mere chronological order, and groups things in a philosophical way. Matthew, for example, gives us a number of the parables together, although, from other Evangelists, we have reason to believe that they were not all spoken at the same time. Matthew gives us a number of Jesus' miracles together; although, from other Evangelists, we have reason to believe that not all of these miracles were performed at the same time.

Matthew describes the life of Christ in an orderly and systematic way, following, not chronological, but logical order. In that respect he is more like our modern historian than was the ancient annalist. The latter confines himself to the chronological order, making his history a succession of dates, giving what happened, for instance, on the twenty-second day of March, then what happened on the twenty-third, and so on. The modern historian does nothing of that sort.

Green, in his "Short History of the English People," takes up a movement and carries that movement on for a hundred years; then going back for a hundred years to begin with another movement and to describe that. The modern historian groups things. Matthew groups, while Mark follows simply the order of time.

There are some peculiarities of Matthew's Gospel. There are many things which we get from Matthew, and from no other of the Evangelists. For example, Matthew alone tells us about the coming of the wise men from the East; Matthew alone tells us of the slaughter of the innocents; Matthew alone tells us of the incidents of the flight to Egypt and return to Nazareth; Matthew alone tells us of the coming of the Pharisees and Sadducees to the baptizing by John; Matthew alone tells us of Christ's betrayal by Judas for thirty pieces of silver; Matthew alone tells us of Judas' remorse and death; Matthew alone tells us of the dream of Pilate's wife; Matthew alone tells us of the watch at the sepulcher; Matthew alone tells us of the bribing of the soldiers at the sepulcher; Matthew alone tells us of the opening of the graves and the resurrection of the saints; Matthew alone gives us the Sermon on the Mount in its fulness; Matthew alone gives us the discourse on humility; Matthew alone gives us an account of the last judgment. It is only Matthew that tells us of that promise of Christ: "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." It is only Matthew that tells that every idle word shall be brought into judgment. It is only Matthew that speaks of the blessing of Christ upon Peter for his great confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living

God." It is only Matthew that gives us the parable of the Tares, the parable of the Hid Treasure, the Goodly Pearl, the Draw Net, the Unmerciful Servant, the Laborers in the Vineyard, the Two Sons, the Marriage of the King's Son, the Ten Virgins, the Ten Talents, and the Sheep and the Goats.

How much there is that we should lose, if we lost the Gospel according to Matthew! Each of the other Gospels has its peculiarities, as we shall see; but Matthew is a precious Gospel in what it alone gives. So Matthew has attained his object by proving to us that this carpenter of Nazareth, this man of low origin, this man who was despised and rejected of men, is, notwithstanding, the Son of God, the King of Israel.

That is the first of Matthew's great teachings; and the second of his great teachings is this: that this Son of God and King of Israel was the sacrifice for human sins, and that by that sacrifice he became the great High Priest by whom Israel is brought back to God. The prophecies of the Old Testament are fulfilled in the death of Christ for the sins of the world: Matthew is the Gospel of sacrifice. Last of all, we find this atonement set forth as the turning-point in human history. This sacrifice of Christ unites the old covenant with the new, constitutes the central thought of all time, and is the one great event of the ages.

When a man leaves his native land and launches out upon the sea, he passes one point after another, until, at last, he comes to the final headland; the great lighthouse there sheds its light over the sea, but disappears at last in the distance; he gets no light any more until

he reaches another land. So I have thought that, when we leave this world and launch out on the sea of eternity, there are many lights; but the last light, the only light that will remain when every other has vanished, will be the light of that crucified Son of God, who suffered for the sins of men. That is the one event of history. And the death of Jesus Christ for the sins of men, the sacrifice of the Son of God for you and for me, is the central subject of the Gospel according to Matthew.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK

THE Gospel we study this morning is the Gospel of Mark. John, whose surname was Mark, is mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles; and he is said to be the son of Mary, who had a house in Jerusalem which was a sort of rallying-point for the disciples in the early days of the church. It is just possible that this very house may have contained the "upper chamber" in which Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper. However that may be, it is certain that John Mark was a Jew. His first name would indicate this. Possibly he was a native of Jerusalem; and yet, being a native of Jerusalem, he would seem to have had some Latin connections; the name Mark, or Marcus, might possibly indicate that; and some other allusions in his Gospel seem to indicate the same thing. It would seem as if the name Mark came to be used more frequently by him than the other Jewish name, just in proportion as his activity transcended the bounds of Palestine, and he devoted himself to preaching to the Gentiles.

It is possible that this passing from the name John to the name Mark, which we perceive in the Acts and in the Epistles, was significant of an inward change in the man himself, or in the purpose of his life; just as Levi, when he entered the service of Christ, became Matthew; just as Saul, when he entered the service of Christ, became Paul.

Peter, in his first Epistle, speaks of Marcus, his son. Now, this may intimate that, during Peter's visits to the house of Mary, Marcus' mother, the young and active lad became inspired by Peter's words, and was converted to Christ. It would seem as if Mark were a convert of Peter; and you remember that, near the close of Mark's Gospel, there is a peculiar incident narrated in regard to a certain young man who, when Jesus was apprehended and the apostles forsook him and fled, still followed after Christ, was laid hold of by the armed men who were taking Jesus away to the judgment-hall, and in his fright and haste fled away naked, leaving his garments in their hands. No name is attached to this incident; but it is perhaps something more than a mere conjecture that this young man may have been Mark himself, and that this incident, in which he seems to be throwing in his lot with the disciples of Christ, was an early indication of his conversion to the Saviour and his purpose to devote himself to his Lord.

It seems that Barnabas was a cousin of Mark. If you will read the chapter in the Acts of the Apostles which tells of Peter's rescue from prison and of his coming back to that house, knocking, and being at first taken for Peter's spirit or Peter's angel, you will find that the chapter is preceded by the account of the visit of Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem, as messengers of the church at Antioch, and is followed by the departure of Paul and Barnabas, taking with them John Mark. Now, it is just possible that, at that very meeting of the church, where they were praying for Peter and for his release, Paul and Barnabas were them-

selves present; and it is just possible that, as the result of that great incident, Mark may have been especially impressed with the obligation of devoting himself permanently and exclusively to the work of the ministry. At any rate, we find that he went with Paul and Barnabas to Antioch; that, when they started out on their first missionary journey, he went with them to Perga; and that it was only when Paul undertook a larger circuit and concluded to go into Pamphylia, in Asia Minor, that Mark seems to have been seized with some change of purpose. It would almost seem as if the impetuous and restless spirit of Peter had found its like in Mark, and that we have in this case some proof or indication of vacillation on Mark's part. He departed from Paul, and went back to Antioch; and the result was that Paul gained, for a time at least, an unfavorable impression with regard to Mark's stability, and censured him. However, we find it was the cause of quite a severe contention between Paul and Barnabas. Barnabas took Mark with him, and held to him; but afterward we find that Paul seems to have received Mark again into his fellowship. We find Mark serving with Paul at Rome as his cherished helper; we find Mark with Peter at the very east of the Roman Empire, in Babylon; and afterward we find him with Timothy at Ephesus, where, in one of his last letters, Paul urged Mark to come to him again at Rome; so that Mark seems to have recovered whatever ground he had lost both with Peter and Paul. The only thing which can be added to these incidents in the life of Mark is the tradition that he founded the church at Alexandria, that he became bishop of that

church, and that he suffered martyrdom there. It is evident that Mark was a great traveler. He went from one end of the Roman Empire to another. He was the familiar companion both of Peter and Paul, with something of the restless and active mind that belonged to the first, preaching both to the Jews and to the Gentiles.

Papias, one of the very earliest of the apostolic Fathers, tells us that Mark was the interpreter of Peter. Now precisely what these words "interpreter of Peter" mean has been a question among church historians. It may mean that Mark was the translator of Peter's oral address; that he was interpreter in that narrow sense; that, while Peter uttered his words either in Aramaic or Greek, Mark interpreted them into the Latin. Or it may mean (and the most are inclined to take the words in this sense) that Mark was the writer in Greek of what Peter spoke in Aramaic, that Mark put down on paper the things which Peter orally preached. The idea, I suppose, is not that Peter dictated, and that Mark took down from his dictation his oral gospel; nor do I think it probable that Peter himself wrote a sort of diary and that Mark expanded it. It would rather seem as if Peter had suggested to Mark the putting down in Greek, as a matter of permanent record, things which were the subject of his preaching, and which Mark probably had heard him detail over and over again, in their somewhat stereotyped form, until at last they had impressed themselves deeply upon his memory.

As Eusebius, under the authority of Clement of Alexandria, tells us, Peter had the Gospel which Mark

wrote out in Greek submitted to him for his approval and sanction; and, therefore, the Gospel as we have it now is practically the Gospel of Peter. There are some indications in the Gospel itself that it is, indirectly at least, the work of Peter, or that it has the sanction of Peter, and practically represents the gospel as Peter preached it. For example, we have all incidents in which Peter was expressly praised omitted; and we have other incidents, in which Peter was blamed, retained. The praise which Christ gave to Peter, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church," is significantly omitted; but the words, "Get thee behind me, Satan," which were spoken to Peter by Christ in the way of reproof, are retained; and we have two cock-crowings in Mark, adding to the guilt of Peter in his denial, while in Matthew we have only one. All these are evidences that Peter had something to do with its authorship.

Many things are narrated to us by Mark in the third person singular, which seem to be reports of what Peter had told to Mark in the first person. As, for example, we have such a sentence as this, "Peter and those with him followed after"; the singular number used in the verb. The best explanation is that Peter narrated this incident to Mark in the first person singular, and that Mark simply put down what he had heard from Peter in the third person; but it is impossible to enlarge upon this. It is only one of many indications that Mark had heard from Peter a narration of his personal experience; that he had become minutely acquainted with Peter's oral gospel; and that he had put down what he had heard from Peter in a more

general form, a form which was capable of more general use.

How can we claim that the Gospel of Mark is inspired, when Mark was not an apostle of the Lord? I suppose that a true answer to that question is just this, that the promise which our Saviour gave to those who should speak and teach in his name was a promise, not simply to the individuals before him, but to those who should stand in their place. It was a promise to apostles and apostolic men. It was a promise to those who should be the first pillars and teachers of his church; so that it was practically a promise to Paul, as well as those eleven apostles that were before him at the time; and it was a promise to Mark, if Mark should be the representative of Peter, the scribe of Peter, the interpreter of Peter. It was a promise to Luke, if Luke should stand in the place of Paul; it was a promise to James, the brother of our Lord. It was a promise to any such as should be chosen in God's providence to be the original proclaimers of the gospel, the putters of that gospel into permanent and written form.

Where this Gospel was written, I do not certainly know; and I do not think that any one can certainly tell. It may have been written in Babylon, with Peter; and it may have been written in Rome, if Peter ever was in Rome; but even about this residence of Peter in Rome, and still more in regard to the fact that Peter was bishop of Rome, I do not think we can say we have any certainty at all. At any rate, it is true that the Gospel was written some time before the destruction of Jerusalem—probably before the year 60;

and if we were to put the date definitely at all, conjecturally, it is more likely to be the year 56, or the year 55, perhaps, than any other. There are certain indications in the Epistles which give some reason for assigning the date within these limits. Some of the Epistles were written as late as the year 62; in the Epistle to the Colossians, in which Mark is mentioned, we have no mention whatever of the Gospels; in the First Epistle of Peter there is an indication that Peter intended to see that the disciples were put permanently in possession of the substance of the gospel: "He would see to it that they had the means of keeping in remembrance these things which they had heard"; and this would indicate that the Gospels were yet to be written. Luke, however, refers to accounts of Christ's life earlier than his own, and we cannot put his Gospel later than the year 59. Matthew must have preceded Luke by at least a single year, and so must be dated as early as 58. Since Mark is the simplest and earliest of the Gospels, we seem compelled to assign the year 56 or 55 for its composition.

Now, the description of Christ which is given in the Gospel corresponds quite well with what I have said with regard to the character of Mark, and with regard to the character of Peter, of whom Mark was the interpreter. The Gospel seems to have been written for Roman hearers, or for Roman readers. It is the Gospel of miracles, we might say; or, to put it in another form, the Gospel according to Mark represents Christ as the mighty Wonder-worker. It is a Gospel intended for the Roman world, for the Romans who were masters of the world, for the Romans among whom

energy and will were almost deified. The Gospel according to Mark is a Gospel of deeds rather than of words. It is a Gospel in which the Saviour is set before us as restlessly active, as full of energy, as full of power. We find, for example, that the portions of our Saviour's life which have not to do with his public activity are wholly omitted. Matthew tells us very much in regard to the infancy of Christ, or at least gives us many incidents connected with his birth and childhood; but, in Mark, the whole story begins with the baptism by John the Baptist. We have described to us only the activity of our Lord; and the long discourses which are given to us in Matthew are either omitted in Mark, or they are so curtailed that but the germ of them remains. We have no subjective sentences or reflections. We have only the merest allusions to that long Sermon on the Mount which is recorded in the early part of Matthew's Gospel, important as that sermon was. The whole method of Mark is the method of an annalist rather than the method of a philosophical historian.

Mark is a man of affairs; Mark is a man who follows chronological order; Mark gives us but very little grouping. In Mark, there seems to be the attempt to follow, from day to day and almost from hour to hour, the incidents of the Saviour's life; and so we find that the element of discourse plays an exceedingly small part in Mark, compared with Matthew and Luke. A single illustration, perhaps, may set this before you better than anything else that I can say. A statistical account of the miracles and the parables, and the proportionate space they occupy in Matthew, Mark, and

Luke is exceedingly instructive. Now Matthew gives us twenty miracles of Christ, and Luke gives us twenty miracles of Christ; and, although Mark's Gospel is not more than one-half as long as the Gospel according to Matthew, Mark gives us nineteen. Yet, when you come to the parables, Matthew gives us fifteen, Luke gives us twenty-three, and Mark only four. This is a simple illustration of Mark's Gospel. He is occupied with events; he is not occupied so much with discourses. It is not so much the teaching of Christ, as it is the life of Christ, that interests him. Moreover, you will find that, in Mark, you have no reference whatever to the fulfilment of prophecy. I speak somewhat hyperbolically here. There are certain sayings of Christ in which Christ's words have to be quoted, one might say; and, therefore, there is here and there an allusion to prophecy; but that everlasting, "That thus it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets," that you have continually recurring in Matthew, you have nothing of in Mark at all. You have no genealogies of Christ in Mark, no connecting of Christ with the old dispensation. You have nothing with regard to the fulfilment in Christ of the predictions of the Old Testament. Mark narrates the life of Christ only as it is a matter of present interest, without reference to the past; and so, while Matthew's great object is to connect great epochs of history with one another, connect the new with the old, and build upon the foundation of the Old Testament prophets, Mark has no such concern. Mark's idea is to set before us the Wonder-worker, the individual personality of the Son of God, and to show how continuously

active he was. Matthew, moreover, is the Gospel of rejection: in Matthew you have a continual undertone of sorrow; Christ is represented there as the sacrifice; he is the fulfilment of the Old Testament predictions of a High Priest of Israel; and so the symbol of the Gospel according to Matthew is the sacrificial bullock; but for Mark, you have as a proper symbol the lion; Christ is the lion of the tribe of Judah; he is the Saviour full of energy, full of power, working wonders among men. Mark's Gospel is the Gospel of activity; it is the Gospel of victory; it is the Gospel of triumph, as compared with the Gospel of Matthew. It is another aspect of the Saviour's life; it is another aspect of the Saviour's work. The Gospel according to Mark is crowded with action.

It is worth while to read over each one of these Gospels in the light of this general characterization. After getting the general idea of each one, if we read it through with an eye to that particular idea, a great many things assume a new significance. For example, you have in Mark a spirit of restless activity; he recognizes in Christ just that which satisfies the demand of his particular nature. There is no word in the whole Gospel according to Mark that is more characteristic and significant than the word εὐθύς, the word "immediately," or "straightway." You find that word two or three times in Matthew; two or three times in Luke; but in Mark it is perpetually recurring. In Mark it occurs forty-one times. In Mark, whatever is done is done "straightway," "immediately," and there is rapid passage from one event to another. As soon as Christ works a miracle, straightway something else

happens. Mark seems to be bent upon passing rapidly from one thing to another, and recognizing the continual activity of the Saviour's life. It is Mark that tells us that the room where they were was so full they could not stand. It is Mark that tells us that our Saviour was so busy with the disciples that they had no time to eat. It is Mark that tells us that Jesus was so restlessly active that the people thought he was beside himself. All these things are given to us by Mark alone.

Mark describes the awe-stricken impression of the disciples that Jesus was more than mortal man when he started to go from the Mount of Transfiguration to Jerusalem to suffer. He went forward with so majestic a mien of determination and sacrifice that the disciples were amazed and afraid. No Evangelist but Mark gives us this aspect of the Saviour's countenance. Mark represents Jesus as the Saviour of achievement. Jesus, in entering into a town, finds that they are all ready to receive him. The whole town rises up to meet him. They run on foot out of their cities to come to him; and, when they bring to him their sick, all that even touched him were made perfectly whole. This incident, which Mark, and Mark alone, gives to us, presents a peculiar impression of the energy, the will, the activity of the Saviour's life.

Thus Mark sets before us our Saviour in the peculiar light of a miracle-worker, a wonder-worker, one who makes majestic and unique impressions, not only upon his disciples but upon all men. The literary characteristics of Mark's Gospel are just such as befit its subject on one hand—the peculiar aspect in which

it regards the person of the Lord Jesus—and just such as befit the nature of Mark, as we are inclined to interpret it, and just such as befit Peter himself, of whom Mark is the representative and interpreter.

Mark's Gospel is the briefest of all the Gospels. It is not only brief in its general compass, but it is exceedingly terse in its style. No other of the Gospels bears comparison with it. Everything is "touch and go," in Mark's Gospel. There is no amplification in Mark; everything is sharp and incisive. And, while everything is brief, there is also the other element of picturesqueness, of a graphic quality. The pictorial element is better represented in Mark than in any other of the Gospels. Mark is a man of affairs; Mark evidently was a man of keen eye; Mark had his wits about him, and was observing and jotted down in memory, if not upon paper, everything he saw; and the result is that, although Mark's Gospel is the briefest of the Gospels, there is more of detail in Mark's Gospel than in either one of the others; i. e., there is more of picturesque detail, more evidence that it is a picture from real life. There is more in the Gospel according to Mark than in the other Gospels that no forger could have counterfeited. It is a healthy, breezy narrative, that takes you right into the midst of affairs. If the Gospel according to John is written for the contemplative life of earlier days than ours, the Gospel according to Mark is written for this wide-awake, moving, pressing, rushing twentieth century.

The Gospel according to Mark is not only brief, terse, vivid, pictorial, graphic in its whole style, but there is also a minuteness of detail, a picking out of

little things that give interest and vividness to the narrative, such as are very difficult to describe in general and can be illustrated only by certain particulars.

Let me try to instance a very few of the things which Mark tells, and which we get from no other Evangelist. At the baptism, when Christ comes up from the water, after prayer, there is one incident which only Mark gives us. Our Lord, with a deep sense of his responsibility as he is entering upon the ministry, to which now pictorially he has devoted himself by submersion under the waters of death, thus, at the beginning of his ministry, symbolically indicating that baptism of death with which his ministry is to close, and feeling his need of the strength and help of God, opens his great heart to heaven and prays to the Father; and then what is the result? Why, Mark tells us that the heavens were rent, and that the Holy Spirit came down like a dove upon him. "Were rent!" No other Evangelist gives us that temporary rending of the heavens; as if God, in answer to Jesus' prayer, has parted the very heavens to come down. It is only Mark who tells us that, immediately after the baptism, the Saviour was driven by the Spirit into the wilderness: driven by the Spirit, overmastered by the tremendous energy of the divine power within, was driven into the wilderness, in order that there he might contemplate the plan of his work; and then, in that wilderness, it is only Mark that tells us that he was among the wild beasts in the lone solitudes of nature, with no other than irrational creatures about him to give him help and sympathy. Yet all these graphic

touches are in the first chapter, and they indicate what we find in every single chapter of the Gospel to the end.

Our Saviour, when he comes up into Galilee, is asleep in the hinder part of the vessel, and is lying upon the rower's cushion, fatigued and exhausted. Only Mark tells of this. When Jesus performs the miracle of casting out the evil spirit from the boy that was possessed, Mark alone tells us that the boy wallowed upon the ground, foaming. Jesus feeds the five thousand; gathers the multitude about him; but only Mark tells us that they all sat down on the green grass. The imaginative, the pictorial element comes in there. Mark saw the green. No other Evangelist apparently did. These are mere illustrations of what occurs many, many times over; and even what I have given will be sufficient to show that we are under a special debt to the author of the Gospel according to Mark, for this peculiar, this beautiful, this pictorial way of setting forth before us the life of the Lord Jesus.

It is not only true that the literary characteristics of the Gospel according to Mark embrace brevity, the graphic quality, exceeding minuteness of detail, but there is also in this Gospel a singular adaptation to the purpose of the author, and to the readers for whom it was designed. It was probably designed for Roman readers. You have, for example, the coins that were used in that day designated, not by their Greek or their Aramaic names, but by their Latin names. The words that would be perfectly intelligible to the Latin readers are the words that Mark uses. You have *centurio* and *speculator,* both of them simple Latin words; though

there were Greek equivalents for the words "centurion" and "executioner," Mark uses the words which would be most intelligible to the circle of readers for whom he wrote.

Many things that are common in Palestine, so common as to need no explanation, Mark sets himself to explain. He does not say "the Jordan," but the "river Jordan," as if there might be some of his readers that did not know that Jordan was a river. He tells us that the Mount of Olives was over against Jerusalem, while only one that knew nothing about Palestine at all, and was very unfamiliar with the topography of the Scriptures, would have needed that explanation that the "Mount of Olives was over against the temple of Jerusalem." Mark has in mind a peculiar set of readers, and he is continually explaining to them the things of which those who were familiar with Palestine would need no explanation. For example, wherever Aramaic words are used, you find that Mark invariably translates them. You do not find that Matthew translates them at all. He has another set of readers and hearers, and does not need to translate.

So we have indications that there was not only design in this Gospel, but that the design was very carefully and regularly followed out; and the literary characteristics of the Gospel are just such as set forth Christ as the great Wonder-worker upon the earth.

It has been said, you know, that the people of the first century were very imaginative, very credulous; that they expected miracles at every turn, and that, therefore, any narrative with regard to the great Prophet and Teacher would have lacked its essential

interest unless miracles had been interwoven with it. But that is all a mistake; for the ruling class among the Jews, the wealthy class, and the most educated class, were the Sadducees; and they surely did not believe in miracle, nor spirit, nor the resurrection. John the Baptist was the great teacher, and had the greatest following that the Jews had ever known. John the Baptist wrought no miracles. Why did he not work miracles, if miracles were natural and necessarily attributed to every great Jewish teacher? There was enough of the critical spirit to distinguish between superstition and reality, and to scrutinize the evidence upon which these narratives of our Saviour's life rested. We have reason to believe that such scrutiny was exercised, and that these narratives were accepted because they conform to the testimony of witnesses who were yet living at the time the Gospels were written.

All we need to do is to compare this vivid, this bright, this healthy, this exceedingly vigorous, and yet this exceedingly calm and clear narrative of the Saviour's life, with the medieval stories of miracles, or the stories of miracles in the Apocryphal New Testament; and we find that we are in an entirely different atmosphere. In Mark the miracles are natural and necessary to the presence of him who is the greatest miracle, who is in himself the incarnate Son of God. If Jesus Christ, God made flesh, did not signalize his coming by a miracle, that would itself, we might say, be the greatest of miracles. If Jesus, the Son of God, became incarnate, then miracles were the natural and necessary accompaniment of his incarnation; and so

we claim that this Gospel of Mark needs only to be read and studied to assure him who reads and studies it that this narrative is a perfectly credible narrative of historical facts.

The argument for miracles in general, of course, does not belong to my present purpose. I have only aimed thus far to show you that the Gospel according to Mark is unique and peculiar in its character; that it sets forth Jesus Christ in his aspect of the Wonder-worker; that it sets forth Jesus Christ so naturally, so simply, with so many indications of the testimony of an eye-witness, so many things that could not possibly have been forged, or merely imagined, that we have in this Gospel one of the very best testimonies that Jesus Christ lived and that he wrought the wonders that were attributed to him.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

The Gospel according to Matthew is the Gospel of rejection and sacrifice. The Gospel according to Mark is an exhibition of the wonder-working power of the Son of God. The Gospel according to Luke, which we take up to-day, is the Gospel of humanity, the Gospel that brings before us most vividly the human life of our Redeemer, that brings him most intimately into contact with our human wants and sorrows. The Gospel according to John, which concludes the four, is the Gospel of the divinity, as the Gospel according to Luke is the Gospel of the humanity, of Christ. So we have a complete cycle, a perfect whole, in these four Gospels with which the New Testament begins.

Luke is probably a contraction for the longer name Lucanus, just as Apollos is a contraction for the longer Latin name Apollonius. Luke was probably not a Jew; for in the Epistle to the Colossians, where Paul mentions those who are of the circumcision, Luke's name is not mentioned; but his name is mentioned among others who follow, and who are apparently all Gentiles, or of Gentile origin. Tradition says that he was born at Antioch, that gathering-place of the nations, far to the north of Palestine.

The Gospel is dedicated to Theophilus, just as the Acts, written also by Luke, is dedicated to Theophilus; and to him in the dedication is applied the very peculiar epithet, "Most excellent Theophilus." That

word is applied also by Claudius Lysias, and by Tertullian, to Felix, and by Paul to Festus, both of them governors of Judea, and apparently it is used very much as we should use the words, "Your Excellency." Theophilus appears, therefore, to have been a man not only of official position, but of note and wealth; and the Gospel of Luke, and the Acts alike, are dedicated to him perhaps in token of respect, perhaps as the *patronus libri,* or patron of the book, who aids in its publication, who gives to it a certain measure of dignity and currency through his sanction and recommendation.

Tradition says that this Theophilus was himself a resident of Antioch, and that Luke was his freedman; and as in those days slaves often were more educated than their masters and pursued employments of great respectability, so it is quite possible that Luke was an educated physician while yet he was a slave, and that after a time, possibly on account of the Christian relations between Theophilus, his master, and himself, he became the freedman of Theophilus. This Gospel may have been dedicated to the master who had set him free, as a token of gratitude for the boon he had received at his hands; and yet, after all this is said, we must also say that it rests upon precarious tradition, and not the very greatest weight is to be attached to it.

Historically the first thing we know with regard to Luke is that he is the companion of Paul in Paul's journey beginning at Troas. Lightfoot, a very sagacious commentator and a very learned man, suggests that this first appearance of Luke in company with Paul almost exactly synchronizes with the attack of Paul's

constitutional malady, which Lightfoot believes to have been epilepsy; and he suggests that Luke may have accompanied Paul, partly in his professional capacity, in order to be caring for the health of the apostle.

You remember that scene in which the man of Macedonia appears in a dream to Paul and cries, "Come over and help us"; and you remember the response which is evoked. The apostle Paul goes over to Europe, and the transition is made from missionary work in Asia to missionary work in Europe. Luke goes with Paul to Philippi; and there at Philippi he seems to remain. Notice now how exceedingly meager the actual material is for building up even this story. It all rests upon the use of the word "we" in place of the word "they," when Paul comes. In all Paul's journeys up to Troas, Luke, in the Acts, uses the word "they"—"they" did so and so; but from Troas we find that he uses the word "we"; and that word "we" he uses until Paul comes to Philippi and departs from Philippi. Then for seven years of Paul's history Luke does not appear to have been with Paul; but when Paul comes back to Philippi again, where Luke may have been left as pastor of the church for the instruction of converts, we find that the word "we" is used again. Luke seems to have accompanied Paul to Asia, i. e., to Asia Minor, and then back again to Palestine; and at last Luke goes with Paul to Rome, and continues with Paul to the end of the history.

Curious, is it not, that, although Luke is the writer of the Acts and was the companion of Paul, he mentions his own name not even once? The only clue we have to his being Paul's companion and a sharer in

his labors is this use of the word "we"; and these "we passages," as they are called, have become famous on this account. Luke seems to have desired no fame apart from that of his master and teacher, the apostle. He seems to have desired to connect himself with Paul, and be remembered only in his connection with Paul. Like that man who ordered that upon his tombstone there should be inscribed these words, "Here lies the friend of Milton," so Luke seems to have desired that his name should be forever connected with the name of the great apostle of the Gentiles. He wanted no other honor than that he should be known as the helper of Paul, the preacher of Christ to the Gentile world.

It is also very curious that the moment Paul disappears, that moment the history of Luke becomes mere surmise, confusion, and fable. Tradition tells us about his being minister in Greece, and suffering martyrdom there by being nailed to an olive-tree in place of a cross; but this is all on no certain foundation. He was the companion of Paul in the most important of his missionary labors, beginning with the second missionary journey from Troas, and then going with him in the third missionary journey, from Philippi to Palestine and Rome.

The date of the Gospel according to Luke may be inferred with some degree of probability from the data that I have already given you. It is pretty clear that the evangelist Luke was not in Palestine (at least we have no data at all to show us that he was in Palestine at all) until he accompanied Paul there from Philippi. You remember what happened after Paul went up to Jerusalem for the last time, how he was apprehended,

and how for two years (between the years 58 and 60) he was prisoner in Cæsarea. This is the only certain time to which we can assign the accumulation of the material that was necessary for the construction of Luke's Gospel. That time of Paul's imprisonment, those two years in Cæsarea, was the only time when Luke could have come into personal contact with Mary, the mother of our Lord, and have derived from her, as he must have derived, his information with regard to the infancy and growth of Christ, his presentation in the temple, and a number of other things which are narrated to us by Luke alone. It must have been the time, if any, when Luke procured from some one of the brethren of our Lord his account of the journey from Galilee to Jerusalem, just preceding Christ's crucifixion. You know there is a passage of almost nine chapters which is entirely peculiar to Luke, and which must have been derived from some constant companion of our Lord.

This time of Luke's residence in Palestine, during the imprisonment of Paul, is the only time we can assign for the collection of this material. During that imprisonment at Cæsarea Paul was not rigidly confined. His friends had access to him; and it was during that time, if any, that Luke may have had Paul's superintendence in his work of putting the materials of the Saviour's life into permanent and written form. As Paul had the prospect before him of leaving Palestine forever and of going to his death at Rome, it would have been just the time that he would have desired to put into permanent form the story of the gospel that he had been accustomed to preach. Just

at this time we may imagine that he would suggest to Luke the composition of such a Gospel, and would have furnished him with such material as was necessary upon his part.

Since the Gospel according to Luke was written before the Acts of the Apostles (it was "the former treatise," you remember, as Luke himself tells us), and since the Acts of the Apostles must have been written before the close of Paul's first imprisonment in Rome, i. e., before the year 66, the only time which we can properly assign to the composition of the Gospel is the year 59. All of the synoptic Gospels, I think, may be put somewhere between the year 55 and the year 60; and the Gospel according to Luke was probably the latest of the three.

This Gospel is a Pauline Gospel, but not a Pauline Gospel in the sense that Paul was himself the author of it. When Paul, in his Epistles, speaks of "my gospel," I suppose he speaks of the oral gospel which he preached, and not of any Gospel which he, himself, wrote out; nor do I suppose that Paul was the author of this Gospel in the sense of dictating it to Luke. There is too much difference in style between Paul and Luke to warrant any such hypothesis.

Irenæus, one of the early Christian Fathers, says that Luke, the follower of Paul, set down in a book the gospel which Paul preached. Tertullian, another Christian Father, a little later tells us that Paul was the illuminator of Luke, i. e., Paul furnished his material in a large part to Luke; and he also says that Luke's digest was commonly attributed to Paul, i. e., it was attributed to Paul as the suggester and furnisher of

the material. There are many things in the purpose and air of Paul's Epistles, Paul's speeches in the Acts, and the Gospel according to Luke, which makes such a Pauline relation exceedingly probable. It is probable, I think, that Paul suggested to Luke, his companion and physician, the writing of the Gospel. It is probable that he superintended it, that to a large extent he furnished material for it, and that it finally went forth with his sanction; and we have reason to believe that the Saviour's promise of inspiration, which belonged to the apostle Paul, belonged also to the evangelist Luke, because he was the representative of Paul.

Paul himself speaks of Luke as the beloved physician, i. e., one to whom he was bound by very tender ties; bound by gratitude, perhaps, for help rendered to him in his physical infirmities; bound, perhaps, by sympathy of nature and spirit, and by the many services that had been rendered to him in his journeys and in his imprisonment. There is one of whom Paul says that his praise is in all the churches, and that one is thought by many to be Luke. In writing to Timothy, during his imprisonment in Rome, Paul says, "Only Luke is with me"; as if Luke was the last one that remained with the apostle in his time of trial. All these things give us reason to believe that Luke had many qualifications of mind and heart that drew him close to the apostle, and made him the proper representative of Paul in the putting of his Gospel into permanent and written form. In fact, they were so closely related to one another in the view of the early church that Marcion, the Gnostic and enemy of Judaism, one who believed that the Old Testament God was a

restricted divinity belonging to Palestine alone, and who held to the antagonism between the Old and the New Testament God—Marcion accepted no Gospel but the Gospel according to Luke; and even out of that he cut those parts that had any Hebraistic relation—such as the first and second chapters and quite a portion between the third and fourth chapters. Marcion threw away all the Hebraistic portion of Luke's Gospel, and accepted the rest as the only Gospel that was worthy of credence, or the only one, at any rate, adapted to his views; and then he threw away all the rest of the New Testament except ten of the Epistles of Paul; accepting the Pauline Gospel and the chief Pauline Epistles simply because they represent the gospel as it was preached to the Gentiles and possibly what we may call the Gentile element in the church. By this, Marcion indicates very clearly how close the relationship was between Luke and the apostle Paul; and yet I suppose we are not to imagine, for a moment, that the relationship was one of simple dictation. There was just as much independence in the construction of Luke's Gospel as we have seen to have existed in the case of the construction of the Gospel according to Matthew and the Gospel according to Mark.

All that I have said up to this point has been intended simply to prepare the way for a presentation of the general character of the Gospel according to Luke. You can see at once that in its author (not a Jew, but a proselyte from the Gentiles, a Gentile Christian), in the furnisher of its material (Paul the apostle to the Gentiles), the Gospel according to Luke occupies a wider horizon, it has a larger aim than either

of the Gospels that have preceded. If you can call the Gospel according to Matthew a Gospel written for Jewish Christians, then you may call the Gospel according to Luke written for Gentile Christians. If you can call the Gospel according to Mark the Gospel written for the Romans, then you can call the Gospel according to Luke the Gospel written for the Greeks; and as Greek was at that time the literary language of the whole Roman Empire, and as men wrote Greek in Rome as well as in Athens, this Gospel according to Luke, in some respects, was better adapted to universal and rapid circulation than either of the others.

This breadth, this application to universal humanity is the characteristic of Luke. There is no Jewish exclusiveness in Luke; nothing, for example, like the confining of the lineage of Jesus to the seed of David and the seed of Abraham. The genealogy in Luke takes us back to Adam, the father of the race; "the Son of man" is set before us here. It is Christ in his largest human relations. We have his connection with humanity continually brought before us in the account of his birth and his growth in wisdom and in stature, as well as in favor of God and man. You find that this humanity of Jesus, the fact that he was a man like all of us, is the dominant thought of the Gospel. Luke brings into view the universal human relations of our Lord. If the Gospel according to John presents to us the divine side of the Saviour's person, the Gospel according to Luke presents to us the human side of our Saviour's person; and so we find that, in Luke, we have the gospel history linked in, more than any other Gospel links it in, with the events of profane history.

It is Luke, and none of the other Evangelists, that gives us chronological data which enable us to fix the time at which various events occurred, gives us the names of the different rulers of the surrounding states, and so enables us to fit this history into what we know of profane history outside; and then there are many things with regard to the humanity of Christ which are brought very beautifully into view in this Gospel, which we find nowhere else; such, for example, as that remarkable incident, the only incident that is related to us during the whole of the thirty years of Christ's life. At the age of twelve years he goes up to the temple, and there is found by his parents listening to the doctors of the law, asking them questions and giving them answers. That incident, which seems to mark the point of time where Jesus first became conscious of the fact that he was the Sent of God, the Son of God, is related to us by Luke only.

We have only from Luke the information that, after the temptation, Satan departed from him for a season; in other words, that there was an interval before Satan came back again with power to tempt him in the garden.

It is only Luke who tells us of the miraculous draught of fishes which accompanied the calling of the disciples. It is only Luke that tells us about the first missionary journey of the Seventy. Luke's miracles are miracles in which our Saviour appears as the Great Physician, as the Healer of lost and diseased humanity. The miracle wrought for the ten lepers is told us only by Luke; it is Luke only who speaks of the conversations of Christ with Moses and Elias at the

transfiguration. It is only Luke who tells us of Christ's weeping over Jerusalem. It is only Luke who tells us of the healing of Malchus' ear by the Saviour in the garden. It is only Luke who records for us our Saviour's prayer as his enemies nailed him to the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." It is only Luke that tells us of the promise to the repentant thief, "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Luke alone tells us that, after the crucifixion had taken place and the Saviour had breathed his last, the multitudes present returned to Jerusalem, beating their breasts. These things draw us near to Christ; they identify Christ with our common humanity; they appeal to our sympathy. There is pathos in them, because we see in them evidence that Christ is really one of us, a man like ourselves.

The discourses of Christ are intended, all of them, to produce this same impression upon us. It is only Luke who tells us about that first discourse in Nazareth, his early home, where Christ offers his gospel first of all to his own townspeople, and especially makes his preaching there the fulfilment of Isaiah's promise that the gospel should be preached to all those in suffering and sorrow. It is only Luke who tells us of the parable of the Importunate Widow, and the certainty that the Judge on high will answer our prayers, as the unjust judge answered that widow's prayers. Only Luke gives us the parable of the Unrighteous Steward, the parable of the Ten Pounds, of the Fig Tree upon which so much care is bestowed and to which so much grace is shown before it is finally cut down and burned up. Luke alone tells us of the

parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus; and finally and above all, it is only Luke that gives us that trinity of parables: the Lost Sheep, the Lost Piece of Money, and the Prodigal Son; that parable that perhaps more than any other of all the Gospels opens to us the fatherly, human love of the heart of God. The parable of the Prodigal Son is given to us only in the Gospel of Luke.

How much we owe to Luke's Gospel, the Gospel of the humanity of our Lord, the Gospel that brings us close to the sympathizing Saviour, one who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities!

Luke is the Evangelist who tells about our Saviour's praying. Run through the Gospel of Luke and you will see that it puts our Saviour in the attitude of a human suppliant as no other Gospel does. At Jesus' baptism God parts the heavens and descends like a dove on the Saviour, as the answer to his prayer. Christ prays all night long before he calls his twelve apostles. Christ prays on the Mount of Transfiguration; and it is after his prayer that the glory of God overshadows him and he appears as the bearer, so to speak, of the Shekinah; and then it is in the garden, where Christ is praying, in Gethsemane, as Luke, and Luke only, states, that the sweat flows from his body in great drops of blood, in the agony of his supplication. All these things bring us close to Christ as a human Redeemer and sympathizing Saviour; and so Luke gives us not only the Gospel of humanity, so far as Christ and the representation of his person are concerned, but he also gives us the Gospel that, in some respects, is best adapted to meet all men upon

their own level and commend itself to all who are suffering.

There was an old tradition that Luke was a painter. I have seen many pictures in European galleries in which Luke is represented as painting pictures of our Lord, of Mary the Virgin, or of the various apostles, or where the picture itself is attributed to Luke. There are such pictures still among the relics of the Roman Catholic churches abroad. This tradition has an exceedingly slight foundation. We have no reliable authority for supposing that Luke was an actual painter upon canvas. Probably some other painter of later time, whose name was similar, was confounded with Luke the Evangelist; and so this tradition grew up. Although Luke was not a painter upon canvas, he was a painter with his pen, and no other Evangelist has given us so clear and so beautiful a picture of the human Christ as Luke. No other Evangelist has told us so much about the Virgin Mary as Luke has told us.

It is a very remarkable fact that, although Luke is the most classical of the New Testament writers when he is using his own style, when he is telling the things he has observed—one might say that the preface to his Gospel is most nearly like classical Greek of any portion of equal extent we have in the New Testament—yet when he comes to the second and third chapters of his own Gospel, and is using Hebrew documents which have come into his possession, he follows them word for word, and they are so Hebraistic in their style that you might almost think they had been written by the Evangelist Matthew. The spirit of faithfulness to his material leads him to give over any attempt

to manipulate what comes to his hands. He gives it to us just as it came to him; so the Gospel according to Luke shows throughout the spirit of faithfulness to the truth, combined with a great deal of what you might call human interest, breadth of view, and love for humanity at large. To Luke Christ is the Light to enlighten the Gentiles, and all men are the objects of his saving and redeeming work. When Luke comes to paint the various apostles, he paints them with a human interest that is very well worthy of a master in the art.

Luke was not, then, a painter upon canvas, but he was a painter with his pen; and of all the pictures in the four Gospels that are given us of the life and work of Christ, there is not one that we should value more highly, that we should study more closely, from which we can get more benefit in our daily, spiritual life than we can from this Gospel according to Luke.

We have next Sunday the contrast to all this. I trust that a review of these four Gospels will bring to our minds what perhaps has never been brought before us so clearly before, the great variety that exists in these various pictures of the life and work of Christ; and the last of them, the Gospel according to John, the Gospel of the divinity, as this one to-day is the Gospel of the humanity, is in many respects the most sublime and most wonderful of them all.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

THERE were two brothers in the apostolic age, one of whom was the first martyr for the faith, and the other of whom lived on to the very end of the first century and died the very last of the apostles. Those two brothers were James and John. John and James were the sons of Zebedee. Zebedee was a fisherman of Bethsaida, in Galilee, a man well-to-do, apparently; for we are told that he had hired servants. Salome, his wife, perhaps after the death of her husband, was one of those women who followed Jesus in his preaching tours through Palestine and ministered to him of her substance.

John was known to the high priest, and it was he who afterward took care of our Lord's mother, according to his commands, until her death, as tradition relates; all of which is more easy to understand if we suppose that he was a man of some means, and more intelligible still if the tradition be true that Salome, his mother, was a sister of Mary the Virgin. In fact, John may have lived and studied in Jerusalem at the school of the rabbins long before his discipleship began. But we read of him first in connection with Andrew at the Jordan, where the Baptist is preaching. The great preacher of reformation points to Jesus, the Lamb of God, his Lord and theirs, and they all leave the Baptist and follow the Saviour.

It appears that John and James were admitted into

an intimacy with Christ enjoyed by no other of the apostles except Peter. These three we find in the inner chamber where the ruler's daughter lies dead, present at that wonderful exhibition of power in her resurrection to life; we find them on the Mount of Transfiguration, beholding the glory of Christ; we find them with our Saviour in Gethsemane, in the depths of his suffering; and Peter and John were among the very first witnesses of our Saviour's resurrection. At the time that our Lord was apprehended in Gethsemane, John, with the other disciples, forsook him and fled; but he seems to have overcome his fears and to have made his way courageously to the judgment-hall. He was present during the trial of Christ; he was present during the crucifixion; there he received the Lord's command to take charge of his mother. He became from that time the adopted son of the Virgin, and he cared for her until her death.

Until the close of the narrative in the Gospels, and in the Acts as well, we find John always in company with Peter. He was at Jerusalem, as Paul tells us, at the close of his narrative, and was one of those who gave right hands of fellowship to the Gentiles; and, remaining in Jerusalem for twenty or twenty-five years after the death of Christ, he was engaged in ministering to the Jews or the Jewish Christians. When the apostle Paul ceased his labors and Peter had suffered martyrdom, the great church at Ephesus and the other churches in Asia Minor needed apostolic supervision; and then, in the prospect of the destruction of Jerusalem, John left Palestine, went to Ephesus, and there remained until his death, which took place probably at

the very end of the century. It was 98 or 99, perhaps 100, before the apostle John died.

There was one interval, an interval of persecution, an interval of exile under Nero, about the year 67 or 68, when John the apostle was banished to Patmos, a wretched rock in the Ægean Sea, and there the Apocalypse was written and sent to the seven churches of Asia Minor; but with that single exception, John was a resident of Ephesus until he died.

The personal characteristics of the apostle John are exceedingly striking; and it is impossible to understand the Gospel unless we know something about the man. John had two remarkable characteristics. In the first place, he was a man of intuitive perception. He was not a man of logic. It has frequently been said that John never argues, he always affirms. John has all the natural predisposition of a seer. One might say he was a born prophet, as far as man can be born a prophet. By his natural temperament and organization he was fitted for the work of prophesying. The eagle, among the cherubic figures, has always been assigned to John as his proper symbol, the eagle that can gaze undazed upon the brightness of the sun, that can soar aloft higher than any other winged creature, and from that height can see the fish in the very depths of the sea. That was the description of John given by the church Fathers, and there is something very characteristic, striking, and correct in it all. John was a man of intuitive discernment, but he was a man of deep and ardent affections. That was the second characteristic. A man of fiery mind, a man of fiery zeal, great warmth, and fervor of temperament, he joined

to some of the very highest intellectual qualifications, the faculties of insight and of spiritual perception, the deepest and most ardent love. He was one who from his nature and fervid temperament was in danger of being biased. This warmth and ardor, if it is undisciplined and untrained, may make a man a mere partisan; and this warm temperament, these strong impulses, had to be checked and disciplined. You remember that when John and James were commissioned by Christ to precede him, as he was going to Jerusalem, and the Samaritans refused him a night's lodging, John and James thought it was quite a proper time for our Saviour to do as Elijah had done before him, and they asked, "Lord, shall we call down fire from heaven upon them?" It indicated the fiery indignation of these two men.

Some years ago I asked my child how she knew the apostle John in the pictures. "Oh," she said, "I always know John because he has long hair and looks like a woman." I suppose that idea of the apostle John is very prevalent in the church. John is thought to be the disciple of love, and often love is thought to be weakness. How very different from that is the truth! Why, John and James were Boanerges, "sons of thunder." They were full of hot indignation against wrong. No weakness there. But that hot indignation was subdued, that warmth of temperament was disciplined by the rebukes of Christ and by the sorrows through which they passed, until at last John became the disciple of love. John in his last days was continually repeating, as the tradition relates, "Little children, love one another." Love is the solvent of all

difficulties. Love, and all other things shall be added to it.

It is said of Charles II that he was a man utterly incapable of gratitude for benefits received, and utterly incapable of indignation for wrongs done him. The only emotion of which he seemed to be capable was the emotion of contempt. An absolute incapacity for indignation against moral evil was his chief characteristic. There is no feature of human character that so indicates absolute worthlessness in the sight of God as the incapacity to hate that which is wrong. And why? Because hatred of wrong is the necessary correlative of love for the right. Do not tell me that a man loves virtue and purity, in whom a deed of shameful impurity and injustice awakens no moral revulsion. Now the depth and strength of John's love showed itself in his power to hate that which was evil; and, therefore, you will find that in John's Gospel and in John's Epistles, combined with this deep, this earnest affection, there is at the same time a power of moral indignation. "Ye that love the Lord hate evil." "Be ye angry," that is the command of God, "and sin not!" Let not personal, private, passionate feeling mingle with your anger; but calm and judicial indignation against moral evil is absolutely inseparable from a true Christian character.

Here, then, were the two great characteristics of John the apostle. He was first, a man of marvelous intuitive insight; and then secondly, that vast intellectual endowment was balanced and interfused in every part with a depth and fervor of Christian love; and it was intellectual power, enlightened and made

energetic by love, that made John capable of recognizing the wonderful truths that he, better than any other of the apostles, has proclaimed to us. It was this intellectual insight, lit up by deep Christian feeling, that enabled him to comprehend, as none other of the apostles did comprehend, the greatness and glory of the person of Jesus, the incarnate Word of God; and then it was this intellectual power, lit up by deep feeling, which enabled him, better than any other of the apostles, to understand that union between Christ and the Father, and that union between Christ and the believer, of which we should know so much less if we did not have the Gospel according to John.

John the apostle was the author of the Gospel. I do not need to go through a process of proof, although this is a question very much disputed in later times. There is argument which to my mind is absolutely convincing, and which to any candid mind ought to carry most perfect conviction. The author of that Gospel was certainly a Jew; the author of that Gospel was a Jew familiar with Palestine; the author of that Gospel was one of the apostles, because he tells of discussions in the narrowest of the apostolic circles, and of secret retreats of the apostles, as only an apostle could do. He was not only an apostle, but he was one of the sons of Zebedee. It is very curious that where the names of the apostles are mentioned in order, the order is not the same as that given in the first three Gospels. There John and James are mentioned first. When John in his Gospel comes to mention their names, the sons of Zebedee come always last. The modesty of the apostle is in itself a signature to the

Gospel. Though he never mentions his own name, and only speaks of himself now and then as the disciple whom Jesus loved, it is very evident that he, and he only, is the author of the fourth Gospel. We have in the Gospel itself direct declarations that this is the apostle who has seen and witnessed these things.

Then we have the testimony of the church Fathers, which I need not narrate to you, although there is a great abundance. Papias, one of the earliest of them, says that John, who leaned upon the Saviour's breast, when in Ephesus wrote the Gospel which bears his name; and the Gnostics of the second century not only knew of the Gospel, but recognized the fact of its genuineness; although at the same time they did not accept many of its declarations. All this external evidence, however, would not be so convincing if we were not able to remove two objections which have been made to the genuineness of the Gospel. It is said, for example, that it is impossible the author of the Gospel should be the same person who wrote the Apocalypse, for the Apocalypse is written in a very different style. The Apocalypse shows a very imperfect knowledge of the Greek language, unfamiliarity with the laws of Greek composition, and the spirit of the Apocalypse is very decidedly different from the spirit of the Gospel. My answer to this is that up to about the year 60, or 65 perhaps, John lived in Palestine, and John was a Hebrew of the Hebrews. It has been said that he put the Hebrew soul into the Greek language. He probably was accustomed from his youth to the use of the Aramaic. Greek was not his mother tongue, nor did he in Palestine constantly use

Greek. He goes to Ephesus. There, or immediately after, at Patmos, the Apocalypse is written—written at the time when he is more familiar with Hebrew than he is with Greek. Hebrew constructions appear in the Apocalypse. There are infelicities, not to say inaccuracies, of grammar. One of the Greek prepositions that is naturally followed by the genitive is actually followed by the nominative in the Greek which John writes. Yet, at the same time, you find that this energetic, fiery spirit which the Gospels would lead us to attribute to John, is precisely the spirit of the Apocalypse, written just before the destruction of Jerusalem, and in view of the coming doom of the holy city. Its predictions and prophecies of coming wrath are precisely the production which we should expect from John's mind at that particular time. Thirty years pass away. Jerusalem has fallen. There is no longer any prophecy of this sort to utter. During that time John is softened; age has come upon him; he has become a gentle and loving old man; and, as the tradition which attributes to him this constant inculcation of the duty of love is probably a true one, it is very natural to suppose that thirty years after, when he writes the Gospel, his style should differ from his early style in these two particulars. In the first place, Greek has now become to him his mother tongue, as it were; Greek is now as familiar as Hebrew was before. A man's style changes very much in the course of years.

If I were to say that because the editorials of George William Curtis, in "Harper's Weekly," were so solid, so calm, so statesmanlike, he could not possibly have written that fervid, eloquent, and poetic style that I

found in the " Potiphar Papers " so many years ago, I should simply show that I did not know the possibilities of change in one's literary style during the long course of a human life. Just so, if I should say, because John in the Gospel writes a smooth, flowing, correct Greek style, he could not have written the Apocalypse, I should show an equal ignorance of the laws of human nature.

The Gospel, therefore, was written far away from Palestine, at a time that was remote from the events which were recorded. It was written out of John's memory, but yet it was written under the guidance and inspiration of that Spirit which was promised to bring all things to remembrance, and which enabled John not only to recall what Jesus had uttered, even when Jesus' discourses were long, but also gave John an insight into the meaning of Jesus' words. And this suggests the second objection which is urged against John's authorship. It is said that these long discourses attributed to Jesus are not only beyond the power of human memory to reproduce, but are manifestly the work of some later author who mixes his own words with those of our Lord, so that there is no telling where the words of Jesus end and the words of the Evangelist begin. We must concede that there is a problem here. But the key is in our hands if we remember Jesus' promise of the Holy Spirit. There was a natural preparation of the apostle for his work. He had been trained in the synagogue and possibly in the rabbinic schools. He had been accustomed to memorize and to repeat the Scriptures. Doctor Bruce maintained that the apostles could all of them reproduce the whole Old

Testament from memory. John's insight and affection made the retention and recall of Jesus' words the joy and comfort of his life. His preaching made this reproduction more and more clear and effective. Little by little the non-essential was purged away, till only the substantial remained. And the living Spirit of Jesus was with his apostle, according to Jesus' promise, correcting, explaining, and even, when necessary, adding to the material in John's mind, so that his Gospel is a truthful representation of Jesus' own mind and heart. If he adds to what our Lord originally spoke, he does this under the inspiration and authority of Christ himself, and in his Gospel we have our Lord himself speaking to us.

Remember that John writes long after the Synoptists. You find, therefore, that there is absolutely no reference to the destruction of Jerusalem, for all this had taken place already. You find that the apostle writes of things in Palestine, as if he were in the midst of people who knew but little of Palestine. You find that, when he speaks of the feasts, he does not speak of the feasts as a Hebrew would, but calls them the "feasts of the Jews"; and you find that, when he uses the word "rabbi," he must needs interpret: "it being interpreted, is teacher." When he uses the word "Messiah," he says, "it being interpreted, is Christ"; and when he comes to speak of the Samaritans, he must say, "the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans." All this would be unnecessary unless he were far away from Palestine, and were writing to people to whom these things were unfamiliar. Then it is also the fact that the writer seems to be acquainted with the synoptic

Gospels; otherwise I think it is inexplicable how he, of all men, should omit any account of the transfiguration, as he does; and it is also curious that John, when he makes allusion to certain of the events which are mentioned by the Synoptists, should do so with the addition of new material, should put the evidence in a new light, should put them to a new use; which evidently shows that he has his own purpose and object in thus referring to them. The miracle of the five thousand, for example, which appears in the Synoptists, is given us in detail by John; but you find that the object with John is just the object that he has in his relation of other miracles, namely, to speak of them as signs or symbols of great truths. The multiplying of the bread was not detailed simply in order that we might get before us the power of Jesus, but in order that Christ might be presented to us as the Bread of Life, the Bread that cometh down from heaven. The opening of the eyes of the blind is related simply because John wished to set before us the power of Christ to open our spiritual eyes.

In John's Gospel all the miracles are followed by discourses, and the miracles are only the text of the discourses. The miracles are not related for themselves only, but for the sake of the truths that they teach. If it were not for John we would not have the opening of the eyes of the blind made to illustrate the opening of the eyes of the spiritually blind, and the raising of the dead made to illustrate the raising of those who are dead in trespasses and sins.

John relates six miracles, and five of them are wholly new; only one, the feeding of the five thousand,

being given to us by the Synoptists. We have an omission of all the parables that are given us in Matthew, Mark, and Luke; an omission of the Sermon on the Mount, and an omission of the last prophecies in regard to the destruction of Jerusalem; in fact, two-thirds of John's Gospel is wholly new. So we see that the Gospel of John adds a large mass of new material to what had been given us before by Matthew, Mark, and Luke. It is written, therefore, as a sort of supplement to these Gospels, and with full knowledge that they already existed. Yet, why was this Gospel written? I have not yet touched upon what is really the main object of my remarks to-day; for unless we get clearly before us the central idea of the Gospel according to John, we shall not get the instruction from it that we should. John represents Christ, then, as the Incarnate Word of God, God manifest in the flesh, the Life and the Light of men. It is the aim of John to set before us the spiritual and divine side of Christ, as the Synoptists had set before us the human side of Christ.

Eusebius, one of the church Fathers, says that the three Evangelists—Matthew, Mark, and Luke—have given us the body of the truth; and the elders of Ephesus urged John to write a spiritual Gospel: i. e., a Gospel which should put into that body the spirit which John knew so much more than the rest. Says Cicero: "The eye sees only that which it brings with it, the power of seeing." John, with his intuitive insight and fervent love, saw the divine side of Christ, as Plato saw the loftier aspects of Socrates' character, while Xenophon did not. John represents Christ to

us, then, as the Word of God, who was in the beginning with God and who was God, who is the Revealer of God to man, the Creator of all things, not simply a human messenger, but the very Truth of God, and the King of Truth.

It is the aim of John, by this revelation, to raise up all Christian life to a new level, to lead all Christians to live their lives in union with Christ, the Son of God. The expression which we have in Paul's Epistle, "The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me," is only an expression of the doctrine that you find more fully brought out in the Gospel according to John.

The plan of this Gospel corresponds perfectly to its object. We have, first of all, a prologue in which, so to speak, the subject is set forth and enlarged upon. "The Word of God who was in the beginning with God and was God," that Word of God becomes human flesh and enters into our human life, and lives the life of our God before us. There are two parallel results or effects within the limits of humanity. One of these effects is upon the unregenerate and unbelieving; and you have a continual growth of unbelief in this Son of God, who has come from above to enlighten men, and you have various types of unbelief. You have the enmity of the high priests and the Pharisees, you have the weakness and cowardice of Pilate, the governor, and you have the despicable treachery of Judas. This unbelief is continually growing, and the signs of this growth are continuous, as you read the narrative from the beginning to the end, until at last

it culminates in hatefulness and enmity, and the result is the crucifixion of the Son of God. In other words, unbelief in its enmity to Christ rises up and puts the Son of God out of the world.

But, on the other hand, side by side with this, there is a growth in faith in a parallel line to the destruction of faith, as the result of this manifestation of the Son of God. You have faith beginning in weakness, and then growing from strong to stronger until, at last, it is capable of overcoming the world. You have types of faith. You have those types, first, in Nathanael, a man without guile. A type of faith in Nicodemus, inward faith which, after all, was not strong enough to make him willing to confess the name of Christ. A type of faith in Andrew, an open-hearted and unthinking faith. A type of faith in Philip, always willing and wanting to bring men to Jesus. Then you have the type of faith which you find in the woman of Samaria; and then, finally, you have the culminating type of faith in Thomas, when that naturally most unbelieving of all the apostles becomes so affected by this transcendent manifestation of the Son of God that all his doubts are removed, and at last he is brought to bow down at the Saviour's feet and to cry, "My Lord and my God." When this last triumph of faith is reached, and the hardest of the apostles to reach is brought into absolute submission to Jesus as his very God, then the Gospel ends. Then the thesis has been proved, and that final confession of Christ is followed by the natural conclusion of the Gospel. These things are told in order that we might know that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of

God, and believing we might have life in his name. So the Gospel properly ends with the twentieth chapter.

The twenty-first chapter is nothing but an epilogue, subsequently added by John himself, added for a particular purpose, because there grew up in the church at that time the idea that the promise of Christ to John meant that he should never die; and John, himself, in his very last days appears to have added that chapter with an account of the circumstances under which that saying was made to him by Christ, and an interpretation of the meaning of it; so that the Gospel according to John properly ends with the twentieth chapter, with a confession on the part of Thomas that Jesus is his Lord.

So there are evidences of structure in the Gospel which are very striking, and which will make the reading more interesting to us if we will notice them as we read.

Notice now the relation of this Gospel to the synoptic Gospels. The Gospel according to John is the Gospel of the spirit, while the synoptic Gospels give us the gospel of the facts. In it we have revealed to us the heart of Jesus, as it is not revealed in the synoptic Gospels. This Gospel gives us the spiritual side of our Lord, while the synoptic Gospels give us the earthly side.

There is a relation of this Gospel to the Apocalypse. It is the spiritual interpretation of the book of Revelation. John's declarations in the Gospel with regard to Christ's person and work were the result of long preaching and long contemplation on the part of the

beloved apostle, who lived longer than the other apostles, at the end of the century, and who quite outgrew the fire and fury of his earlier writing in the Apocalypse.

Then there is a relation of this Gospel to the Epistles of John. The Epistles of John are running comments upon the same great facts, a subsequent addition probably to the Gospel itself, the Gospel beginning with the Son of God in heaven, and showing us that this Word had become embodied in humanity, and, on the other hand, the Epistles going through the reverse process, and showing that this Jesus whom they had handled and whom they had seen with their eyes here upon the earth was absolutely the Son of God, who came down from heaven.

So there is evidence, not only of an internal unity in the Gospel itself, but of an organic relation of the Gospel with John's other writings, in the providence of God and under the direction of his Spirit, which shows it to be a part of the whole system of truth given us in the New Testament.

There are many things which John gives us in this Gospel, but which are not given to us elsewhere. For example, we have an account of the Judean ministry, which hardly comes to us at all in the synoptic Gospels. The scene of John is mainly laid in Judea, whereas the scene of the synoptic Gospels is mainly laid in Galilee. We have here very much more to do with the scribes and Pharisees, high priests, and rulers of the people than we have in the synoptic Gospels. Then, moreover, we have here two great miracles, the two greatest, the first and the last: the miracle performed at the

wedding-feast of Cana, and the last and most wonderful of Christ's miracles, the raising of Lazarus from the dead. These are given us only by John.

We have not given to us here at all the Sermon on the Mount, and yet we have in place of that Sermon on the Mount the next longest discourse of Christ, that last profound discourse to his disciples upon the very eve of his suffering. This has been called the "holy of holies" of the book of God. How much we should lose if we had not these chapters in which Jesus tells us: "Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me." If there be any portion of Scripture that brings us near to Christ himself and lets us into the very secrets of the divine nature, it is these last chapters of John's Gospel. We have not these discourses anywhere else. We owe them entirely to John.

Now notice that John deals very little with the outward. John does not tell us anything about baptism, or the command to be baptized; but John does tell us the meaning of baptism in the discourse with Nicodemus: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God"—the necessity of an inward birth that is symbolized outwardly by baptism. John does not tell us anything about the Lord's Supper and its institution; but he does tell us of that profound discourse which sets forth the central truth which the Lord's Supper symbolizes.

John does not tell us anything with regard to the external organization of the Christian church, but he tells us most about that union of the believer with Christ which is the basis of the Christian church.

Unless a man knows something of that union of the believer with his Saviour, he cannot be a Christian nor has he any right to a place in the Christian church. It is, then, the vital truth itself, the central thing itself, that John with his clear insight sets forth to us in the most glowing way. Mark, you remember, begins his story with the public ministry of Christ; Matthew and Luke begin with the birth of the Saviour; but John alone begins with the Eternal Word with the Father before the world was.

The style of John corresponds perfectly to the matter that he has to set forth. It is distinguished by wonderful fulness, but, at the same time, by wonderful depth. It is profound, yet simple. It is astonishing how few words John uses, and how constantly repeated those words are—life and death, light and darkness, God and Satan. All these words come over and over and over again.

These words are rich words. They are full of meaning. They are like the gold coins which only the great lord keeps about him, and with which he makes his payments. It is the Gospel of holy love and peace. There is a contemplative, quiet, calm spirit running through it all, a spirit that is not of this world.

I have often thought that the skeptic, if he would but read this Gospel according to John, and ponder it as he should, would find in it a sufficient evidence of the truth of Christianity. Christ is set forth here in such a way that a man cannot mistake the dignity and glory of the representation, if he be a man who has any sense of his personal needs, if he knows himself at all to be a sinner.

It has been said that "poetry is the art of putting infinity into things." To show the relation of our life to the infinite is the aim of poetry. Judged by that standard, this Gospel according to John is the greatest poem that was ever written, the greatest composition of any sort, indeed, that was ever written upon this earth. If there were one single book of the Bible which I could retain, providing all the rest were taken from me, it is this Gospel according to John, for this sets before me my Lord and my Saviour as no other Gospel does.

Yet such a man as John Stuart Mill read this Gospel and called it unintelligible and insipid. May God forgive him! An unregenerate heart and self-complacent soul may read the Gospel of John, and it will seem like a mystic tale, with little sense or meaning; but for the man who knows himself to be a sinner, above all, the man who has had any sense whatever of his dependence upon Christ, for such a man this Gospel is the very word of Christ himself, and it makes Christ manifest in his beauty and glory.

The work of a forger? Such a production as this, written by one who pretended to be a disciple of Christ in the second century, for merely political purposes? It is as absurd as to tell me that Beelzebub has been casting out devils for these eighteen hundred years. This Gospel according to John has cast out too many evil spirits to permit us to attribute it to a forger. It can have its authorship only in a heart that was filled with Christ himself, only in a heart that was drawn near to the living God by the mighty inspiration of his Spirit.

JOHN'S GOSPEL THE COMPLEMENT OF LUKE'S

I PRESENT in this lecture an orthodox essay in the higher criticism. It is an attempt to show from internal evidence the relation between the Gospel of Luke and the Gospel of John. It is not wholly original. In the year 1900, Doctor Gümbel, gymnasial professor and consistorialrath at Speyer on the Rhine, gave to the world an exegetical study which he entitled "John's Gospel a Complement of Luke's Gospel." The word "complement," however, does not fully represent the German word *Ergänzung*. The author means that the third and the fourth Gospels constitute one whole; that John composed his Gospel with Luke's Gospel before him; that his own work is intended as a supplement and not as an independent account of Jesus' life and teaching; that he therefore limits himself to filling up the gaps in Luke's narrative, omitting everything which Luke had narrated, except in those cases where his own eye-witness and ear-witness enable him to add useful interpretation or detail.

It must be acknowledged that the reasoning of this little German book, if it be sound, will do much to settle the disputed questions as to the date and the authorship of the fourth Gospel, and to place on an impregnable basis the historicity and trustworthiness of the other Gospel narratives. When the halves of a broken jar are dug out of the ground at Mycenæ or Gnossos,

and are found to fit each other so that every indentation of the one corresponds to a protuberance of the other, there is double reason to deduce from its shape and epigraphy the facts of its history. Our author contends that John's Gospel and Luke's Gospel fit into each other like two dove-tailed parts of a bureau drawer, or like the interlaced fingers of our two hands. The later is constructed to complete the earlier, but to add only those matters of personal observation and experience which are needed to make the twofold history a perfect whole. This demonstration, if it be well grounded, will relieve John's Gospel from the charge that it is merely a philosophical speculation of the second century, and will give to the higher aspects of Jesus' life the value of settled history. I regard the work of Professor Gümbel as an important contribution to theological science, and I am glad in this essay to call attention to it. But I must not take his conclusions for granted at the start. Let me proceed to the proof.

The apostle John was born in Galilee. James was his elder brother. His father, Zebedee, was a master-fisherman who had hired servants and was a man of means. John's mother was probably Salome. At any rate, she still lived after he had become a disciple. She was ambitious, and not content that her sons should always follow their trade as fishermen. She had still the worldly conception of Jesus' mission, and she incited James and John to ask that one of them may sit at Christ's right hand and the other on his left in his future kingdom. The annual visits to Jerusalem at the time of the feasts gave opportunity to the

sons to become acquainted with the localities of the sacred city. It is not therefore wonderful that this child of well-to-do parents shows minute knowledge of Bethesda, the Pool of Siloam, Solomon's Porch, the brook Kidron, Gabbatha, Bethany, fifteen furlongs from Jerusalem. But the fact that our Saviour on the cross commits his mother to John's care, so that he takes her to his own home, indicates that the family had a permanent residence in Jerusalem, and that they were householders of some consequence.

The author of the fourth Gospel has an acquaintance with official and notable persons in Jerusalem, more intimate than is shown by the other Evangelists. It is John who recognized the representatives of the Sanhedrin when they came to ask the credentials of the Baptist; it is John who tells us of Christ's conversation with Nicodemus and of the gift of spices which Nicodemus made for Christ's burial; it is John who is the friend of Annas and of Caiaphas, and who has the entrée to the high priest's house. This last fact of John's relation to the high priest throws light upon his whole history. That relation could not have been formed after John had become Jesus' disciple. It indicates that before John went to the banks of Jordan to hear the Baptist he had lived in Jerusalem and had become intimate with its rulers. These connections could not have been made by a known follower of Jesus, and after Jesus' criticism had made scribes and Pharisees his enemies.

It requires some historical imagination to reconstruct our view of those early days. Is it too much to suppose that John's ambitious mother, knowing his

fervid religious spirit, and eager to withdraw him from manual toil, had sent him when a mere youth to the great rabbinical school at Jerusalem, and had maintained him there? That was the road to education and to station. What happened to Saul of Tarsus might easily happen to John. It is quite possible that the family of Zebedee was of priestly rank, and that relatives of theirs held priestly office. Polycrates, the Christian Father, bishop of Ephesus in 196, relates that John was born a priest, wearing the high-priestly miter, and the German writer Delff asserts[1] that this word miter, or *πέταλον*, indicates that John was of the family of the high priest and had actually performed high-priestly functions. James is also said to have worn the *πέταλον*, or miter. I pay little regard to this tradition. But it shows in the early church a belief that John's connection with the high priest was something more than a mere matter of friendship. The young man had some claim upon the elder because of family relationship.

Consider now how much it would mean to an ardent and spiritual soul to be sent for education into such surroundings. Who were the high priests of that day? Not Pharisees, but Sadducees. They were a sacerdotal aristocracy, comparatively few in number, but comprising most of the able and original thinkers of the Jewish nation. It was their sharpness and vigor that had given them wealth and political influence. They had seized the reins of government, had formed alliances with the Romans, had made the high priesthood hereditary in their families. Over against the

[1] Geschichte d. Rabbi Jesus v. Nazareth, 71.

narrow traditionalism and ceremonialism of the Pharisees they were the speculators, the inquirers, the philosophers, the skeptics of the day. They did not believe in the resurrection, nor in angel or spirit. They were rationalists rather than believers, politicians rather than rationalists. Free thought could be tolerated among them, so long as it did not imperil their standing and their power. Hence it was not until Jesus' work was half done that they joined with the Pharisees to put him to death.

It is said that Philo of Alexandria, whose birth antedated that of Jesus by twenty years, went on one occasion to Jerusalem to offer prayer and sacrifice. It is quite possible that on that visit he may have exchanged with the doctors of the law some ideas with regard to the mediating principle between God and the world. Jerusalem had thirty-two synagogues, and each part of the world had its peculiar place of meeting in this center of Judaism. There was a synagogue of the Alexandrians in Jerusalem, and Apollos, Paul's convert, was an Alexandrian by race. The Alexandrian doctrine of the Logos must have been known and discussed in the Jewish schools, and here the warm-hearted and receptive John may have gotten his first acquaintance with that great word whose meaning only dimly revealed itself to him, but which he found so useful after he had seen that the Word had become flesh and had dwelt among us.

If Jesus at the age of twelve was found among the doctors of the temple, both hearing them and asking them questions, we may believe that the disciples whom Jesus loved had a similar experience. And he must

have found others of like mind. Nicodemus did not need to be an old man to be a ruler of the Jews, for it was only thirty years that were required for qualification. John must have formed his acquaintance before he became Jesus' disciple, and so may have afterward introduced him to our Lord, and even have been present when Nicodemus came to Jesus by night. The Sadducean indifferentism and abstract speculation could not satisfy either of these spiritually inclined young men. Nor could the Pharisees, with their insistence upon outward ceremonial, answer the deep demand of their hearts for one who should make atonement for sin and give life to the stricken soul.

When John the Baptist uttered his call to repentance and proclaimed the near approach of the promised Messiah, all Palestine was stirred, and all truly earnest Jews were moved, as by a common impulse, to flock to John's baptism. That one word, "Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh," and so taketh away, "the sin of the world," was to John the beginning of a new life. Though his modesty leads him to keep back all mention of his own name, "that other disciple" who was with Andrew, was, if not the first, then certainly the second of those whom Jesus called to follow him. From Jesus John learns his own sinfulness and need of redemption, but also Jesus' perfect ability to supply that need. So he stays with Jesus and rejoices in him as the promised Messiah and Saviour of the world.

Matthew and Mark add little to our knowledge of John's personality, but what they give us confirms the view we have taken. John is recognized as belonging to the inner circle of the disciples. At the raising of

Jairus' daughter, at the transfiguration, and in Gethsemane, Jesus takes with him John, as well as Peter and James. But we have only two utterances of John in the synoptic narratives: the one when John forbids the man who was casting out demons in Jesus' name without following the Lord, and the other when with James he would call down fire from heaven upon the Samaritans who refuse our Lord a night's lodging. Jesus calls the two brothers, James and John, "sons of thunder," apparently because of their tropical impulsiveness and disposition to take Jesus' part against every enemy of their Lord. With Peter, after Jesus' resurrection and after Pentecost, John goes up to the Beautiful Gate of the temple and assists in the cure of the lame man; with Peter, he is imprisoned and protests against the repressive edict of the Sanhedrin; with Peter, he is sent to Samaria to invoke upon the new converts the descent of the Holy Spirit. But in all these cases Peter appears to be the speaker, and John aids only by his counsel and example. And now John disappears wholly from the sacred record, and we hear of him only from tradition. Let us follow Scripture for a little and turn our attention to Luke, if perchance we may learn something of the origin of his Gospel.

Eusebius, the church Father, tells us that Luke was born in Antioch. The text of Beza, in Acts 11 : 26, reads "when *we* were assembled," and makes it possible that Luke's acquaintance with Paul began in the meetings of the church at Antioch. But it is well-nigh certain from the "we" sections of the Acts that Luke and Paul were intimately associated from the

time of Paul's entering Macedonia to the time of his second imprisonment at Rome. This association covers a period of fourteen years, A. D. 50-64, though for seven years of these fourteen Luke was probably left by Paul at Philippi as pastor. On his third missionary journey Paul takes Luke as his constant companion and assistant. From Paul Luke must have learned all that Paul knew of Jesus' history, together with Paul's interpretation of Jesus' work. Scholars of all schools have acknowledged the Paulinism of Luke's Gospel. It is nominally addressed to a Greek of distinction, but it is evidently intended for the whole Greek-speaking world. All Jewish limitations seem in it to be broken down. It is the Gospel of universal humanity. Samaritans and Gentiles are made object-lessons of faith and prayer, of benevolence and blessing. Renan called Luke's Gospel "the most beautiful book ever written," and Harnack says that his story was "the indispensable condition of the incorporation of Paul's Epistles in the New Testament canon."

When was Luke's Gospel written? Its date must be determined by comparison with that of the Acts. But the Acts gives us no account of the trial or of the release of the apostle Paul. Inasmuch as Harnack has recently acknowledged that the Acts must have been written before the close of Paul's first Roman imprisonment, and that the Gospel must be dated yet earlier, we may reasonably conclude that Paul's imprisonment at Cæsarea was the time and the occasion of its writing. After two full years of ministry at Ephesus Paul had gone to Jerusalem, knowing that bonds and death were not far away in the future. He

is arrested and imprisoned in Cæsarea. Luke is with him there. But while Paul is in bonds, Luke is free. For two whole years Luke can go to and fro from Cæsarea to Jerusalem, and from Jerusalem to Cæsarea, serving as Paul's messenger, gathering from Mary, Jesus' mother, and from relatives of Jesus, from the elder apostles, and from other eye-witnesses the materials for his Gospel, and with Paul's sanction, if not his actual supervision, collating all the earlier narratives, and writing his own account of Christ's life and ministry.

It is quite probable that Luke may have had in his hands our present Gospels of Mark and even of Matthew, and that he may have incorporated in his own narrative such portions of those Gospels as suited his purpose. The earliest germs of our New Testament were probably the Logia, or sayings of Jesus, and these, in the Hebrew or Aramaic in which they were originally spoken, may have been written down within five or ten years after Jesus' death. Matthew himself may have been the first to commit them to writing. Mark, however, was the first to add the story of Jesus' life and miracles, and so to transform the Logia into a complete Gospel. Then Matthew may have enlarged his original work and translated it into Greek. When Luke begins his Gospel by saying that "many have taken in hand to draw up a narrative concerning those matters which have been fulfilled among us," he may be acknowledging his indebtedness to the two preceding Gospels, as well as to the new sources of information which he has himself discovered.

It is also possible that the Ephesian church possessed

the Gospels of Mark and of Matthew. But there was special reason why Paul should have wished that church to possess the Gospel according to Luke: Matthew was written for Jewish Christians, and Mark for Roman Christians, while Luke incorporated what was best in these and yet was written for the whole Gentile and Greek-speaking world. Is it not probable that one of Paul's first concerns, as he went to Rome or after he had reached the eternal city, was to furnish his dear Ephesian converts with Luke's priceless record of Jesus' works and teachings? We know that he sought by letters to supply the lack of his own personal ministrations to the churches of Asia. This central church of Asia was a pivot upon which the Christian future of the whole Eastern world revolved, and he had, therefore, spent with it a longer time than he had devoted to any other church of the Gentiles. Luke's Gospel would largely make up for Paul's own absence and for the loss of his oral testimony. The Ephesians, moreover, knew and loved the Evangelist, for Luke was with Paul when he parted from the Ephesian elders, and in Paul's letter to the Colossians, who were so near to Ephesus, he speaks of Luke as "the beloved physician." Could Paul withhold from the Ephesians this help to their faith? What his own preaching could not do this written Gospel of Luke might do, by fixing indelibly in their minds the lineaments of the Son of God. I think it probable that the Ephesian church was possessed of the Gospel according to Luke, and that Paul himself took care that they should possess it as a substitute for his oral teaching, and as a permanent expression of his view of Jesus' life and work.

There can be no doubt that Paul during his two years' stay in Ephesus had taught the Ephesians the main facts of Jesus' life. He had done this orally. Now that he has given them Luke's written Gospel, his work is done. The year 64, or the year A. D. 65, marks the date of Paul's martyrdom. The Ephesian church must now have other leadership. The death of Mary, the mother of Jesus, and the approaching fall of the Jewish state, leaves the apostle John free to take up Paul's work and to carry it on to larger issues. And so this deeply pondering, but quiet and undemonstrative, man finds himself at last and is called to utterance. Many years of care for our Lord's mother have made him possessed of abundant material which has found no outlet in the way of publication. He was sent to Ephesus to give his own life-picture of Jesus to the world. He could furnish what Paul could not, namely, his own personal reminiscences of Christ, together with the inferences and reflections which had come to him from long meditation upon that marvelous divine manifestation and from deeply drinking in the spirit of Jesus.

So John leaves Jerusalem and takes Paul's place at Ephesus, in Asia Minor. There he cares for the churches of Asia for thirty years, or to the end of his life. He suffers exile for a time in the Isle of Patmos, but the result is the Apocalypse. Polycrates, a bishop of Ephesus, a century after John's death, testifies that the remains of the apostle rest in Ephesus. During this long ministry of thirty years, Irenæus tells us that John would not use water in which Cerinthus the heretic had bathed; Clement of Alexandria relates

his seeking out the young robber who had fallen away from Christ; Jerome informs us that, in his old age, the apostle had but one sermon, "Little children, love one another!" All this was supplemental to Paul's teaching and method, but it was in no respect contradictory to it. Paul had taught the preexistence and deity of Christ before John came to Ephesus, and the doctrine of union with Christ was central to the theology of both. John, like Paul, was a cultivated Jew, and in his own way able to withstand the Judaizers and to win the heathen. Paul had the wider training, but John had the greater personal knowledge of Christ. And it was this that the Ephesian church most needed.

John, at Ephesus, had the great advantage of finding the church already in possession of a written Gospel. Luke's Gospel was virtually Paul's testimony, and John had only to supplement Luke's Gospel by adding his own recollections of Jesus, and his own interpretations of Jesus' works and words. Where Luke has spoken John omits, except in those cases where additional detail is needed to complete the narrative. But there are large tracts of Jesus' life and ministry for which Luke did not possess the material. The early Judean ministry Luke does not narrate, apparently for the reason that his informants were the men of Galilee. John, who had lived in Jerusalem and who knew the authorities there, could tell of Nicodemus and the Sanhedrin, and of Jesus' first year of appeal to the ecclesiastical chiefs of the Jewish nation.

One reason why the Synoptists do not tell us more of Jesus' early life and ministry is probably that the disciples did not at the first appreciate the importance

of his acts and utterances. Only gradually did they learn to mark every step and treasure up every word. It takes some education, moreover, to retain long discourses in the memory, and correctly to reproduce them. John was gifted in both these respects beyond the other apostles. From the very beginning his intense spiritual nature found the words of Jesus to be spirit and life, and we have seen it probable that his early education qualified him to remember and to repeat all that he saw and heard. The methods of the rabbinical schools were very unlike those to which we are accustomed, though they still prevail in the East, as in the Mohammedan University, the Azhar Mosque, of Cairo. The rabbins did not dictate. The scholars repeated what they heard. Instances are frequent in which long lectures are retained and reproduced by the hearer, with scarcely the loss of a single word. It is not at all impossible that the discourse to Nicodemus is a substantially verbatim report, and that John's account of Jesus' words to his disciples on the night of his betrayal is a nearly precise reproduction of that wonderful address by one who lost no part of it. Bruce, in his "Training of the Twelve," declares that the twelve apostles probably knew the whole Old Testament by heart. Pundita Ramabai, at Oxford, recited from the Rigveda, *passim,* and showed that she knew more of it by heart than the whole contents of the Old Testament.

I make these remarks to show that John's nature and training qualified him to add precisely those elements which Luke's Gospel lacked—the elements of personal acquaintance with Jesus and of spiritual

reception and retention. But there was another advantage which John possessed at Ephesus. He had come out from the falling Jewish state; he could regard the Jews as enemies of his Lord; and he was safe from their hatred and violence. That is probably the reason why he could tell the story of Lazarus' resurrection when the synoptic writers make no mention of it. The Jewish authorities had sought to put Lazarus to death, and they might make it dangerous for any who would tell the story of his awakening. When John took up his residence in Ephesus, Lazarus was probably no longer living. So John was at liberty to utter freely all that he knew, and what he knew formed a supplement to Luke's Gospel not only interesting, but also absolutely necessary in the way of explanation and completion. As I have said in another connection, the Christ of John's Gospel is required to vindicate the truthfulness of the Synoptics. Only Christ's deity can explain his perfect humanity. And John's Gospel is the Gospel of Christ's deity.

I have no doubt that the original gospel was entirely oral. That does not bring suspicion on the narrative, for the reason that memory has latent powers which in our day of printing are undeveloped. Memory retains what it must, and the events of Jesus' life, as well as his utterances, came to seem of such importance that it was matter of life and death to preserve the record of them. For thirty years after Jesus' death they were handed down by tradition. There was an oral gospel, more or less complete, preserved in parts which suited the needs of each Christian community, but in parts which when put together

made a coherent whole. The human aspect of Christ's life had gained its hold upon the churches. Even thus early, however, Ebionites, like Cerinthus, so exaggerated the human as really to deny the divine. It was John's mission to rescue the church from a degrading heresy by giving his testimony that Christ was the Eternal Word, who was with God in the beginning, and who was himself God. This he did for many years by oral utterance, using Luke's Gospel for his text, making it the basis of his preaching, but supplementing it with reminiscences and reflections of his own which he ultimately reduced to writing.

Time will not permit a full account of the many points in which Luke and John are interlaced and complementary to one another. I must select a few characteristic examples and must let them suffice. And the first is, of course, found in the prologue of John's Gospel. Luke had traced everything from the beginning (ἄνωθεν), but John finds an earlier beginning. Luke carried the genealogy of Jesus back through David and Abraham to Adam, the son of God; but John goes back to eternity past, and sees in Christ none other than Deity revealed. He does not tell the story of Jesus' birth because Luke had already narrated it, and the Ephesians were familiar with it. But he can supplement it with his own insight into its meaning, and can express the truth in language which he had learned from the Alexandrian philosophy in the rabbinical school at Jerusalem. There he had heard of the Logos, the formative law of nature, the ideal of perfection, the firstborn Son of God. But the rabbins had never gotten beyond the existence of

this Logos in the thought of God. John had learned from his acquaintance with Jesus that this Logos was an actual and not merely an ideal person. Jesus' own words, "Before Abraham was born, I am," and "The glory which I had with thee before the world was," had shown him that Jesus' personality transcended all space and time, reached back into eternity past, and was bound up with the personality of God himself. Jesus is the Word made flesh, deity revealed, divinity brought down to our human comprehension and engaged in the work of our salvation.

This is John's interpretation of Jesus' life, under the influence of the promised Spirit of God. John does not say that Jesus used the word "Logos" of himself, or that he derived the knowledge of it from Jesus. The form comes from John's early training, though the substance has been taught him from on high. He therefore gives us the term Logos only in his prologue. It constitutes his thesis. The Gospel is its proof. When, in spite of the growing enmity and rejection of the Jews, the last doubter among the apostles is won, and Thomas bows at Jesus' feet, crying, "My Lord and my God!" John's thesis is proved, and the Gospel comes to its intended end, the last chapter being subsequently added to correct a prevalent belief that Jesus had promised to its author an immortality on earth. John's Logos-doctrine confirms Luke's account of the immaculate conception, and gives the reason for it; indeed, it is still possible that the original text in John 1 : 13 referred, as an extant reading would have it, not to believers, but to Christ, "who was born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the

will of man, but of God." The terminology of John came from Philo, but the doctrine itself came from God. John was not even its sole discoverer and publisher, for Paul, in his letter to the Colossians, before John came to Ephesus, declared Christ to be "the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him and unto him; and he is before all things, and in him all things consist."

It has been said by Bruce that we have no trace in Luke's Gospel of a doctrine of the atonement. I do not think this statement correct, for Luke tells us of the baptism of suffering and death which Christ was to undergo, and quotes Jesus' words at the last supper in which he says of the bread, "This is my body which is given for you," and of the wine: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, even that which is poured out for you." But if there were in Luke any lack of clearness in proclaiming the doctrine of atonement, surely John's account of the Baptist's testimony would fill the gap. He has before him Luke's story of the Baptist's stern and minatory preaching and the Baptist's announcement of the Judge who was standing at the door. John tells us what sort of deliverance the Messiah is to bring, for he gives the Baptist's designation of Christ as "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." This, indeed, was the message which drew the heart of John to Christ. Like Luther, the young man was seeking a gracious God. That

search led him to the Baptist. And the singular, ἴδε, "behold!" seems to be directed to John himself, and points him to One who is the sacrifice for sin, who pays the debt of the guilty, who reconciles sinful men to the holy God. Luke had used the words "grace" and "glory" in his account of the annunciation to Mary and to the shepherds; John uses these same words to describe the impression which Jesus made upon his followers: "For the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only-begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth."

In Luke there is a chasm between Jesus' baptism and his ministry in Galilee. John shows how the new grew out of the old. He fills the vacancy by telling us that Jesus returned to the Baptist after his baptism and then received his testimony, only gradually beginning to preach and winning the best of the Baptist's disciples. Without John's account, Luke's narratives of Christ's beginnings in Galilee would lack all proper connection with the narrative of his baptism. John tells us of the marriage at Cana—possibly the marriage of Jesus' own sister—and of the presence there of Mary, the mother of Jesus; but he tells us nothing of Jesus' temptation because Luke had narrated it. John tells us of the first cleansing of the temple and of Christ's nocturnal interview with Nicodemus, and the natural inference is that while the other disciples remained in Capernaum after their return from the Jordan, John, who had a home in Jerusalem, was with Christ, and was the witness and recorder of his Judean ministry. Luke had told of Jesus' visit to Nazareth,

and John omits it; Luke had not told of the Saviour's talk with the Samaritan woman on the way to Galilee, and therefore John relates it. When Jesus goes up alone to Jerusalem, John is there to report the cure of the paralytic, and to hear, possibly from Nicodemus, of the rising enmity of the Pharisees. From Luke alone we should never know why the Pharisees sent their emissaries to Galilee to gather evidence against Jesus. In fact, it is John who relates four journeys of Jesus to Jerusalem, while Luke gives us only two. John's Gospel is therefore the basis of our chronology of Jesus' life, and is indispensable as the completion and explanation of Luke's story.

John's return from his private visit to Jerusalem marks the close of the Judean and the beginning of the Galilean ministry. The first year of Christ's work was, roughly speaking, a year of appeal to the Jewish authorities; the second year was a year of appeal to the Jewish people. Now comes the second calling of his apostles. It had doubtless been expected and longed for. There is a temporary popularity. So long as the multitude could cherish hopes of revolution, and could expect a miraculous supply of their physical wants, Jesus was sure of a following. But his spiritual demands are too great for weak human nature. The Pharisees poison the minds of the crowd against him, and the people forsake him. There is a rising tide of opposition which presages condemnation and death. Between the fifth and the sixth chapters of John's Gospel there is a cleft which only Luke's Gospel enables us to fill. But John knows this link of connection to be in the hands of his readers, and he

only shows us how it was that the people came to take sides with the Pharisees. He tells us that the chief priests, who were Sadducees, were now added to the number of Christ's enemies. Since the Sanhedrin has passed a decree against him, and has sent officers to take him, Jesus predicts his own death and goes to meet it. Luke tells us of the end of the battle, and of Jesus' leaving Capernaum, but only John tells us why.

The journey to Jerusalem is a gradual progress. The way lies beyond Jordan. There is a great congeries of parables, discourses, and miracles which only Luke records. The parables of the Good Samaritan, the Friend at Midnight, the Rich Fool, the Guests' Excuses, the Lost Sheep, the Lost Money, the Lost Son, the Unrighteous Steward, Dives and Lazarus, the Unjust Judge, the Pharisee and the Publican, the Ten Pounds, the Cumbering Fig Tree; the miracles performed on the woman with a spirit of infirmity, the man afflicted with dropsy, the ten lepers; the discourses at the sending out of the Seventy and on their return, with regard to prayer, trust in God, and coming judgment, the Galileans slain by Pilate, whether few are saved, the lament over Jerusalem, on counting the cost, on forgiveness and faith, on the kingdom that cometh not with observation, on Zacchæus as also a son of Abraham—all these wonderful revelations of truth and power are peculiar to Luke, and they are not related by John. John tells us why Jesus was compelled to leave Galilee and to spend so long an interval in Perea; Luke gives us the result in that marvelous cluster of parables and miracles which form so unique a feature of his Gospel

The year of appeal to the Jewish people had proved as futile as the previous year of appeal to the Jewish authorities. This breathing-spell in Perea constitutes the last year of Jesus' life, and it is an appeal to his own chosen circle of disciples. He would fit them to preach the gospel after his death. He betakes himself with his apostles to the wilds beyond the Jordan for privacy, and to escape the machinations of the Jews. There he shapes the pillars of his future church. But even this work comes soon to an end. How strange it is that Luke throws no light upon the sudden breaking up of our Lord's seclusion and his venturing an approach to Jerusalem! It is John who supplements Luke's Galilean informants as to the closing week of Jesus' life. The death of Lazarus draws Jesus to Bethany, and it is Lazarus' resurrection that precipitates Jesus' apprehension and condemnation. We have seen a reason why Luke should be silent, so long as Lazarus was alive and was in danger from the Jews, and we owe to John alone the account of that wonderful and fateful miracle. But we could not fully understand even John, if Luke had not previously told of Jesus' intimacy with Mary and Martha and Lazarus. Jesus' friendship for that family of Bethany was such that he gave his own life for his friends. Luke, however, mentions only the place; John gives us the time. Luke tells us of the crowd that accompanied Jesus to the holy city; John tells us whence they came, namely, from Jerusalem itself. Mary's anointing and Judas' reproof are peculiar to the fourth Gospel, but they are so interwoven with Luke's narrative as to indicate John's intention to complete it.

John gives us no account of the Lord's Supper, though he was sent with Peter to prepare for it. How can that be explained except by supposing that he had Luke's Gospel before him? The long report of Jesus' discourse and prayer makes up for the lack. But there are graphic touches besides. Jesus *rose* to wash the disciples' feet; he must have been sitting. He announces his betrayal: this rouses Judas to execute his plan. John gives no words of Christ's passion in Gethsemane, for Luke had given them already. But he does tell the effect of Jesus' majesty upon the servants, and he adds Jesus' request, "Let these go their way," to show how easy it would have been for Jesus to escape, and how careful he was to shield his disciples. He adds the name "Malchus" to Luke's telling of Peter's sword. John does not mention Jesus' taking three to watch with him. He conceals his own personality. Mark, Peter's interpreter, alone gives this.

John describes the preliminary examination before Annas, while Caiaphas summons the Sanhedrin; but he leaves Luke to tell of the trial before Caiaphas. Perhaps John was not there, but had gone to recover Peter after his denial. John has not denied his Lord, though the maidservant's words, "Thou too," to Peter indicates that John was now known to be a disciple. Luke states the result of the trial before Pilate, but he does not explain the steps which led to it. What occurred in Pilate's palace must have been told by Jesus himself, for neither Jews nor disciples entered there. Only John reveals the deepest ground of complaint on the part of Christ's enemies when he shows them accusing Jesus of claiming to be the Son of God.

John's narrative of the crucifixion, the entombment, and the resurrection is fragmentary in itself, but with Luke's it is complete. John explains the term "Golgotha." He mentions the quadruple of soldiers. He shows how the Lord who forgave his enemies could care for his friends when his mother and the penitent thief alike received the blessing. The words, "I thirst," and "It is finished," are peculiar to John. The piercing of Jesus' side shows that there was no need of breaking his legs, and John sees in this a fulfilment of the prediction that "a bone of him shall not be broken." Luke had told of Joseph's providing Jesus' tomb; John adds that Nicodemus brought a hundred pounds of spices. Luke tells us of the women coming to the sepulcher; only John tells of Jesus' appearance to Mary. Luke describes the manifestation of the Lord to the disciples at Emmaus; only John tells of Jesus' second appearance to his apostles when the doors were shut, when he showed his wounded side, and when he won the doubting Thomas to faith in his Lordship and Deity.

The ascension was a marvelous event and most important to the Gospel narrative. Why does not John mention it? Simply because Luke had told of it already. There is no antithesis or evasion here. The omission confirms the previous record. Luke is vouched for. Indeed, his Gospel may be indirectly alluded to when John says: "Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book, but these are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye may have life in his name."

"This book" may possibly imply the existence of an earlier book already in the possession of the Ephesian Christians. What John did not write Luke had already written, and the testimony of both is that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that life and salvation are to be found only in personal union with him.

Students of the New Testament history have very commonly been puzzled by the omission in the fourth Gospel of all mention of Jesus' birth and childhood, his temptation in the wilderness, his rejection at Nazareth, his miracles in Capernaum, his choosing of the Twelve, the Sermon on the Mount, the parables by the sea, the Gadarene demoniac, the raising of Jairus' daughter, the mission of the Twelve and of the Seventy, the confession of Peter, the transfiguration, the discourses against the Pharisees, the Rich Young Ruler, the predictions of the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world, the institution of the last supper, the walk to Emmaus, the ascension. This omission is now satisfactorily accounted for. John's readers had all these before them in another book, which it is his purpose only to supplement and complete. He narrates the same matters of which Luke had written, only when he can add new incidents or confirmations from his own observation and experience, as, for example, when he tells the story of the feeding of the five thousand as a text for Jesus' declaration of himself as the Bread of Life, or when he adds the account of Thomas' conversion to Luke's report of Christ's second appearance to the disciples after his resurrection. Throughout John's Gospel there is an avoidance of incidents related by Luke, and a studious

silence with regard to what had been already written, a silence so discriminating and complete as to preclude all possibility of its being accidental.

But the argument is not perfectly conclusive if we leave it here. The things which John does say are more important than those which he omits. The testimony of John the Baptist, the miracle at Cana, the conversations with Nicodemus and the woman of Samaria, the healings of the nobleman's son, of the infirm man at the pool of Bethesda, of the man born blind, Jesus' proclamation of himself as the Bread of Life, as the Light of the World, as the Good Shepherd, his answer to the Greeks who sought him, his raising of Lazarus, his farewell discourses and his intercessory prayer—all these are not only sublime disclosures in themselves, but they so fit into gaps in Luke's Gospel as to convince us that there was design in the relation of them. Every convexity of the one, whether great or small, so answers to a concavity in the other as to render it well-nigh certain that the purpose of the author was to turn what might have seemed to some a merely human gospel into the record of a divine life lived upon the earth. But John's Gospel does not come to us as an antithesis or contrast to the Gospel of Luke. It only brings out Luke's real meaning, or the meaning of the Holy Spirit who inspired Luke's writing, and was promised to lead Christ's followers into all the truth as it was in Jesus.

My treatment of this large subject has been a very meager and hasty one, but I trust it has led to certain reasonable conclusions. Let me summarize them as follows:

1. John follows Luke, and is not to be considered as an independent narrative.

2. Luke is already well known and only needs supplementing.

3. John's supplementary matter, with a single exception, consists only of personal reminiscences.

4. That exception is the philosophical prologue which adopts a great word from the rabbins, but fills it with a new and personal meaning.

5. John's Gospel is intended to complete the Gospel of Luke, and with this to constitute one historical narrative.

6. Its record of events and of discourses is so minute and exact that it can be the work only of the apostle John.

7. The origin of its Logos-doctrines must be referred, not to Ephesus and to the influence of Alexandrian philosophy there, but to Jerusalem and to the schools of the rabbins, where both John and Paul had studied.

8. The Logos-doctrine itself is absolutely needed to supplement the picture of Jesus as given us by the Synoptics, and it was substantially the teaching of Paul before John wrote his Gospel.

9. The divine aspect of our Lord's personality is as essential as the human aspect, and Christ is none other than God manifest in the flesh.

10. John's Gospel relieves Luke's from the charge of being a merely humanitarian picture of Christ's religion, and makes Christianity to be nothing less than a vital and personal union of the human spirit with the omnipresent and omnipotent Christ.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

We pass to-day from the study of the Gospels to the study of the Acts of the Apostles, from the study of Christ's work FOR us to the study of Christ's work IN us and in his church.

The author of the Acts of the Apostles is Luke. We have plenty of external evidence to Luke's authorship in the testimonies of the church Fathers, Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, and Eusebius, testimonies which I need not narrate to you; but we have internal evidence also, with which all of you are more or less familiar, and which, when it is set forth in order, is exceedingly convincing.

Luke begins the Acts of the Apostles with a reference to the former treatise, and that former treatise, as it is addressed to Theophilus, just as the Acts is, makes it quite certain that Luke himself, and no other, is the author of the Acts as well as of the Gospel.

Then we have similarities of style in the Gospel and in the Acts which cannot possibly be accidental. It will perhaps interest those of you who are familiar with the Greek to know that we have the use of verbs compounded with prepositions, in Luke and in Acts, to an extent not at all paralleled by any other of the books of the New Testament. We have the use of the preposition *σύν*, for example, to a remarkable extent, as we have not in the Gospel of Matthew, of Mark, or of John. While we have that preposition used in

Matthew only three times, we have that preposition used in the Gospel according to Luke twenty-four times, and in the Acts of the Apostles fifty-one times, showing that there is marked similarity of style in this particular. We have the Greek verb πορεύεσθαι, to go, hardly used at all, used very sparingly indeed in other portions of the New Testament; but in Luke's Gospel we find it forty-nine times, and in the Acts of the Apostles thirty-eight times, showing that the peculiarities of the one are peculiarities of the other.

There are other connections of the Gospel and the Acts in the fact that the earlier portion of the Gospel, in which Luke seems to have material made ready to his hand, is Hebraistic in its style. He shows his faithfulness to his authorities by accepting the very words of the original, in many cases, while the latter portions of the Gospel are written in a more pure Greek. Now that is precisely the case with the Acts. The earlier portions of the Acts, which have to do with transactions within the bounds of the church in Palestine, are somewhat Hebraistic in their style; and the latter portion of the Acts, which narrates events of which Luke was in part an eye-witness, is written in Greek of a better style, a more classical Greek. Now this correspondence between the Gospel and the Acts tends to show that the same person was the author of both.

Then we find that there are striking coincidences between the speeches of Peter and Paul and James in the Acts and in the Epistles. We have from those same persons in each case not only the same general train of thought, but also expressions which indicate a

peculiar authorship. You remember that great work of Paley, "*Horæ Paulinæ*," the object of which was to show that the Acts and the Epistles show wonderful correspondence; that the Acts confirms the Epistles and that the Epistles confirm the Acts; that there are remarkable agreements between them which would not have been possible if the Acts had not been a historical document, and if, on the other hand, the Epistles had not been written by the very men to whom they are attributed. Here are proofs that Luke was the author of the Acts, and proof also that Luke's work is veritable history.

The date at which the Acts of the Apostles was written I think can be determined within a narrow limit, since Luke was the author. It is a continuation of the Gospel of Luke, or rather it is a work by the same author with the intent of making it a supplement to the Gospel; and, being a supplement to the Gospel, we are warranted in saying, as we said in discussing the Gospel itself, that in this book Luke represents Paul. Luke does not write at his own motion, or upon his own responsibility. The apostle Paul furnishes a large part of the material; the apostle Paul sanctions the work; the apostle Paul probably supervises the work; and, therefore, we are warranted in believing that, as the Gospel according to Luke was probably written toward the close of Paul's imprisonment at Cæsarea, the Acts of the Apostles was probably written before the close of Paul's first imprisonment at Rome. As we may date the Gospel some time not after the year 59, so it is proper to date the Acts of the Apostles not much before the year 61, or toward the end of it.

You remember that the Acts, although it narrates Paul's journey to Rome, narrates Paul's preaching at Rome, speaks of Paul's imprisonment at Rome for two whole years, speaks of Paul's addresses to the Jews at Rome, yet does not give an account of the close of Paul's imprisonment at Rome. It is very certain that the Acts of the Apostles was written before the close of Paul's imprisonment. It is almost impossible that the Acts of the Apostles should have been written after the close of Paul's imprisonment; for, if Luke had known of the issue of that imprisonment, that remarkable event which formed so natural a close of the apostle Paul's life would undoubtedly have been itself narrated and described. The fact that he leaves Paul at the end of that two years' imprisonment, without indicating when that imprisonment terminated and what the result of it was, is to my mind evidence that the Acts of the Apostles must have been written before the close of that imprisonment, and that the only reason Luke does not tell us what the result was in that case is simply that he did not know, simply because the result had not yet taken place. So I think we may put the date of the Acts of the Apostles before the close of the year 61, as we put the date of the Gospel according to Luke before the year 59.

Now this fact will throw considerable light upon the circumstances in which the Acts was written. You must remember that Paul had had already twenty years of experience in preaching and speaking. That imprisonment at Cæsarea was apparently ordered by divine providence, like the imprisonment of John Bunyan in Bedford jail, in order that he might, in

solitary meditation and leisure, collect the results of what he had orally uttered, and prepare them to be put into permanent and written form.

As the imprisonment at Cæsarea, during which Luke had access to Paul, as also did the other friends of Paul, was a time when Luke might have had constant conversation with the apostle, and yet at the same time been perfectly free to consult the earlier apostles and secure the material that was used in his Gospel; so we may believe that the imprisonment of Paul at Rome was also used for the purpose of putting together the narration of the wonderful way in which God had led him in his apostolic labors, and in which material that had been previously collected in Palestine might be supplemented by other material furnished by Paul in Rome; so that the Acts of the Apostles in its complete form might be the result.

In Cæsarea, you remember, Philip the deacon resided. It was in Cæsarea that Cornelius had lived; and all the evidence in connection with the preaching of Philip and in connection with the evangelization of Cæsarea was right there at hand. The persons who were most interested were ready to communicate what they knew; and there was a multitude of other opportunities by which Luke might get at his material, might be directed in the putting of it together by the great apostle.

It seems to me that this fact, that the temporary ceasing of the apostle's public labors was thus made the means of a far greater permanent benefit to the church of God than even his public and oral preaching of the gospel could have been, is full of suggestion

to us. Paul calls himself a prisoner of Jesus Christ; and yet he is perhaps of more service to Jesus Christ while he is a prisoner, in comforting the saints and in preparing a message of instruction to the church of God through all coming time, than he could have been in his oral discourses and his public labors; and so there is many a saint of God laid aside for a time by divine providence, prevented from mingling with the world, who, in that very imprisonment, so to speak, may be gaining new strength by reflection and prayer, and may be actually doing more for the world than he could have done had God permitted him to go about in his accustomed way. Imprisonment and seclusion are not the worst things for the saints of God. It certainly was not so in the case of the apostle Paul. I believe that these two imprisonments have resulted partly in giving to us not only a number of Paul's Epistles, but also the Gospel according to Luke and the Acts of the Apostles.

This designation, "The Acts of the Apostles," is very interesting in itself. In the Sinaitic manuscript the only designation given is "The Acts." I think it probable that this was the original title. Certain it is that Luke's Gospel has no author's name, and it is equally certain that no author's name is given to the Acts. The Acts is anonymous, not only so far as its authorship is concerned, but also in the fact that in it the name of Luke does not even once occur. As a matter of fact, it is not the Acts of the Apostles in any such sense as we are ordinarily inclined to believe. That phrase, the Acts of the Apostles, would give us the impression of a continuous and complete history

of the apostolic labors and sufferings. Now it is very far from being the case that the Acts of the Apostles is such a document as this. Why, we have no history of the church in Jerusalem and of the work of the apostles there after the imprisonment and the deliverance of Peter! All that we know with regard to the great church in Jerusalem is what we know previous to that time; and then we know absolutely nothing of the introduction of the gospel at Rome, which might be conceived by us as the most important epoch in church history. The Acts of the Apostles tells us nothing about that. Moreover, we have not here a record of the labors and sufferings of a great majority of the apostles. The Eleven are mentioned, indeed, and the filling up of their number by the election of Matthias is spoken of at the first; but yet we hardly have the eleven mentioned before they drop out of sight; and, besides the intimation that they exist, once or twice afterward, we have hardly any account of them. And even with regard to the labors and sufferings of Paul, how much there is that is not related to us! Paul has told us with regard to his sufferings, his scourgings, his shipwrecks, his perils in journeyings and perils at sea, his troubles through false brethren and through imprisonment. Not a tenth part of all this is told us in the Acts of the Apostles. We should hardly know that Paul passed through that multitude of perils and troubles if it had not been for words of his in the course of his Epistles.

The Acts does not give an account of the doings of the apostle John. One might think that the apostle John was just as important a person as Peter, just as

important a person as Paul; but aside from the fact that John appears once as the companion of Peter at the healing of the lame man in the temple, and he does not say anything at that time, we have him mentioned only three times, and nothing is told us with regard to John's individual work in Palestine.

How curious it is, then, that, in what by its title purports to be the Acts of the Apostles, we have not the acts of very many of them. Those things upon which curiosity would like to dwell are entirely omitted. What, then, is the principle of selection which has led the Holy Spirit, out of the multiplicity of apostolic movements, to choose so few, and to set only these before us in the Acts of the Apostles? I think we must say, first of all, that it chiefly indicates that not all things are equally important in the history of the church of God. If so, we might expect that the Acts of the Apostles would be a series of annals, telling us from year to year just what happened to the church.

No, there are great critical movements upon which history turns. There are great central personages who are called by God to be leaders. There are great epochs, when there are changes from the old to the new. And we have brought to light this fact in the Acts of the Apostles, that there were great central personages, that there were great critical movements, that there were great changes; and upon those changes the whole future history of the church has depended. It is upon these that all the rays of divine light are made to converge. We have in the Acts of the Apostles two foci, as one might say, two great points of light; those points of light are made prominent, and

everything else is allowed to recede into apparent insignificance.

Everything turns here upon the planting of the church among the Jews and upon the planting of the church among the Gentiles; and there were two great personages who were instrumental in these plantings of the church: Peter was instrumental as the apostle to the Jews, and Paul was instrumental as the apostle to the Gentiles. Around the movements and the works of these two apostles, their respective thoughts and their proper relation to each other, the whole story revolves.

In the Acts of the Apostles we find these two great influences set forth: the setting up of the gospel of the kingdom of Christ among the Jews, and the setting up of the gospel of the kingdom of Christ among the Gentiles. So the Acts of the Apostles forms a bridge from the Gospels to the Epistles.

Here is something very important in our understanding of the structure of the New Testament. The Gospels had been occupied in setting forth Christ's work *for* us, Christ's external work for man, his person, his incarnation, his teaching, his suffering, his death, his resurrection. All this is naturally followed by the account of Christ's work *in* us, Christ's work in his church, the extension of his gospel to the world; and this we have in the Acts of the Apostles. After the first work of the apostles in the setting up of the church has been narrated, we just as naturally have the instructions which the apostles give for the guidance and direction of the church, and these we find in the Epistles of the New Testament.

Let me bring this a little more vividly to your minds by asking you a question. Suppose, for a moment, you should just let the Acts of the Apostles drop out of the New Testament entirely. Imagine, for a moment, that your New Testament had no such book as the Acts; imagine you had read through the Gospels from Matthew to John, and you had gotten before your mind all Jesus had done in his suffering, death, and resurrection, and now you close the last page of the Gospel according to John and you turn to the next. Behold, you read, "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ." "Well," you say, "Paul! Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ? Why, I have read nothing about Paul. Who is Paul? and where does Paul come from?"

Do you not see that you would have no bridge from the Gospels to the Epistles; that you would have no voucher for the authority of Paul; that all these epistles, which form so large a part of the New Testament, would have no authority, simply because you would not know anything of the adding of Paul to the number of the apostles? You would not know of Christ's direction of Paul in his apostolic labors; you would know nothing about the churches to which he preached; and you would know nothing about him who preached to them. So important, therefore, is the position of the Acts of the Apostles in its intermediate place between the Gospels and the Epistles, as assuring us of the authority upon which the Epistles rest. We should not read the Epistles with any assurance that they were the word of God; we should not read them with any understanding either of their office, of the persons to whom they were written, or of the reasons they wrote

them, if it were not for what is told us in the Acts of the Apostles. The Acts of the Apostles, narrating to us the founding of the church at two great critical points and the leadership of two great men, has given us the connection between the Gospels and the Epistles, and has furnished us a clue to all the remaining part of the New Testament.

Now, after having said so much with regard to the two points, the author of the Acts of the Apostles, viz., Luke, and the title of the work, viz., "The Acts," and after having explained just how much weight and how little weight is to be attached to that phrase, I would set before you the two great objects of the Acts. Those two great objects are given to us in the Acts themselves; they are given to us in the very first verse of the Acts; so that, although we have no title, we do have as clear an indication of the drift of it all, as if Luke, who wrote the Acts, had set down a title for himself.

You remember that the Acts begins by speaking of the things which Jesus *began* both to do and to teach, and then it proceeds to narrate what follows. We have in that word "began," I think, a clue to Luke's purpose, to one of his main objects. In other words, it is intimated to us that the work of Christ, when he was here in the flesh, was only the beginning of his work. It is intimated to us that Christ's work *for* us was only preparatory to another work *in* us; that Christ's work FOR the church was only preparatory to his work IN the church. Jesus himself intimates this when he promises the coming of the Holy Spirit. He says, "I will send the Comforter"; and then, in imme-

diate connection with this, only a sentence or two after, "I will come to you." In other words, Christ comes in the Holy Spirit; and the work of the Holy Spirit is, in a proper sense, a continuation of the work of Christ.

We have in the Gospels, then, the beginning of Christ's work upon the earth; and we have in the Acts the continuance of that work through the apostles and through the church. It will interest you to look through the Acts and to mark the passages—a great number of them—in which the Holy Spirit is mentioned, and in which the work and the power of the Holy Spirit are set forth. You know that the first great event in the Acts of the Apostles is the pouring-out of the Holy Spirit. We have the ascension of Christ narrated, apparently in connection with the promise that the Holy Spirit should be bestowed. Christ's going was not, as John says, to leave the disciples orphans, but only to prepare his coming again in a new form. The Holy Spirit is the all-present Christ. The Holy Spirit is Christ present more universally than he could possibly be if he were here in this world in visible form; so that in the Holy Spirit we have Christ present with his people, scattered though they may be over all the earth, present at the same moment to every Christian soul.

The descent of the Holy Spirit, then, is the first great event in the Acts of the Apostles; and now, after that descent of the Holy Spirit, we have the continual manifestation of the Spirit's presence and power; we have miracles performed in the name of Jesus; we have the sending out of the apostles and deacons, chosen through the Holy Spirit; we have the condemnation of

Ananias and Sapphira, who lied to the Holy Spirit; and then we have the final missionary work of Paul and Barnabas, with all the evidences which the Holy Spirit gave of his presence and power. In the Acts of the Apostles we have the presence and power of the Holy Spirit continually set forth; the words Holy Spirit are continually recurring, as they do not recur in the Gospels. The first great object of the Acts of the Apostles is therefore to set forth Christ's work in the world through his church; the building up of his church through the agency of the apostles; and yet not this agency as something separate from him, but rather as the agency which he himself uses, to show his personal power in setting up his kingdom in the world; in other words, the first great object of the Acts is to show forth the setting up of Christ's kingdom in the world by the living, personal agency of Christ himself through his Holy Spirit.

Now, there is another object which the Acts has in view, and that is the setting forth of the universal character of the religion of Jesus. At this distance of time we have almost no conception of that revolution in human thought which took place when Judaism was outgrown and Christianity was extended to the Gentile world. We have no conception of the narrowness and prejudice of even those apostles to whom Christ first preached his gospel. The idea that one could ever be saved, except by becoming a Jew, was something entirely foreign to their thoughts. Their only idea of salvation was that of coming within the pale of Judaism, submitting to the Jewish ritual and organization, and thus becoming heir to the promises

given to Abraham and the fathers. The idea that the gospel was for all the world, and that any human soul could come directly to God through Jesus Christ, without being circumcised and becoming a Jew, was something so strange and wonderful that it required a perfect earthquake to shake the idea into the apostles' minds.

The Acts of the Apostles is in great part given us to show the process of transition by which the gospel passed from the Jew to the Gentile, by which the Gentile came to hold equal rights in the kingdom of God, and to be regarded as equally an object of divine favor and blessing. The tendency among the Jews was just as it is among Christians to-day, to think that they were the special favorites of heaven, and that God had chosen them and brought them into his kingdom for their own sakes. It was the object of Christ Jesus, so soon as he had ascended his throne, to dispel this selfishness, to convince his church that the gospel was for the world. So you find that there is a passing from Peter to Paul.

Paul, you know, on his last journey goes back to Jerusalem and preaches the gospel there. He does everything he can to conciliate the Jewish Christians; in fact, he comes under very favorable circumstances on account of the multitude of his converts among the Gentiles; but you know what difficulties he met with. The result of that embassy was that he was actually driven out from Jerusalem, and was compelled finally and forever to make his way to the Gentiles and to confine his labors to them.

There is a transition from Jerusalem to Rome.

After the twelfth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles you read almost nothing in regard to Jerusalem. The scene of the apostle's labor is changed. It is now more important that the gospel should be preached through the world; and you have a gradual progress from Jerusalem and Judea, to Samaria, to Antioch, and finally to Rome. Home missions, we may say, led to foreign missions.

We have the passage from Peter to Paul, we have the passage from Jerusalem to Rome, we have the passage from Jews to Gentiles, we have the passage from local to universal; and as this passage is made we have speeches and utterances on the part of Peter and on the part of Paul which give us typical illustrations of their way of presenting the great truth to those whom they address.

If you take, for example, Paul's utterances to the heathen, there is one comparatively long speech at Athens. Then you have a comparatively long speech to the Jews of Pisidia, and then you have another comparatively long speech to the Jews at Rome.

So you have a marvelous system of selection that takes out the important things and sets them before us, with the one idea of showing how the gospel that once was thought by the Jews to belong to themselves alone is to be preached as the means of salvation to every human being, both Jew and Gentile.

In this process we have a beautiful incentive to broad and universal work in the kingdom of Christ. Just so surely as we are shut up in ourselves, and fancy that we are brought into the kingdom of Christ simply for our own sake, just so surely the blessings of the

kingdom will be taken from us and will be bestowed upon others. The Acts of the Apostles breathes the most liberal spirit, and urges us to no selfish conception of the kingdom of God, but to efforts to extend his gospel to earth's remotest bound.

Let me go back to the thought with which I began. The Acts of the Apostles narrates to us the beginning of the work of Christ in the church and in the world, the work of Christ since his ascension. It lays down the principle of that work. It teaches us of the resurrection, which was the main subject of preaching. It tells us something of the power in which that historical fact was to be proclaimed, the power of the Holy Spirit. It teaches something of the greatness and power which is possible to Christ's servants, and it teaches that we are to leave all personal considerations and devote ourselves to the great work of subduing the world. But in all this it gives us only the beginning. It tells us only what Christ BEGAN to do and to teach while here in the flesh, with the view of spreading his gospel from Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria to Antioch and Ephesus and Athens and Corinth and Rome, and to the ends of the earth.

Now the Acts of the Apostles is, so to speak, first of all, his new work in the foundation of the church through the preaching of the gospel; and we have in it a clue to the method of Christ's labor, and his promise that success shall attend that labor as it goes on through all the ages, until his purpose is accomplished and the whole world shall be brought back to God.

At the end of the first chapter of John's Gospel there is a text which I think we might well apply here.

Jesus says, "Nathanael, because I said I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? Greater things than these shalt thou see." Then he goes on to speak of the heavens opening and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man, intimating that he was to be the medium of communication between earth and heaven, the channel through which all God's blessings were to flow to the world. "Greater things than these shall ye see," says Christ. As he utters those words to Nathanael he utters those words to us. We have seen great things since the time when the Acts of the Apostles was written. The gospel has been preached in almost every heathen land of the habitable world, and thousands have been converted; still Christ can say to us, "Greater things than these shall ye see"; and there never will be a time, even after all his wonderful revelations of the divine nature, after all the wonderful triumphs of his kingdom, when he will not be able to turn to the sacramental host that follows him and say, "Greater things than these shall ye see." The Acts of the Apostles, like the gospel itself, is only the beginning of the more wonderful future that is before us. Let us thank God and take courage, for "mercy shall be built up forever."

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

THERE is no writing of the New Testament that more needs to be studied in connection with the history of the writer than the Epistle to the Romans. The apostle Paul was born about the year 7 or 8 of our era, in Tarsus, the capital of Cilicia, in Asia Minor. Cilicia was populated with Greeks, and Tarsus was no mean city. It was a place of great literary and philosophical activity. It almost ranked with Athens and Alexandria.

The schools of Tarsus were famed throughout the world, and Paul received in his early days the best education in Greek literature and in Greek philosophy. He refers three several times to Greek poets, and there are other indications that he was familiar with Greek poetical literature. In his controversy with the Stoics and Epicureans, he shows a very correct and distinct knowledge of their doctrine.

Paul, although he was born at Tarsus, was a Roman citizen, and a Roman citizen at the time when to be a Roman was almost greater than to be a king. He was a Roman citizen not because all the inhabitants of Tarsus had had Roman citizenship conferred upon them. As a matter of fact, Roman citizenship was conferred upon all the inhabitants of Tarsus at a later time; but at this time Paul was free-born, because his father was already a Roman citizen. The father may have rendered some special service to the state and so may have had Roman citizenship conferred upon him.

There is no question but that this conferring of Roman citizenship must have given to the family of the apostle Paul a high social position; and it is quite evident in all the bearing of the apostle, both in the Acts and in his Epistles, that there was with him that abiding sense of dignity which belongs to one who, from his earliest years, has been accustomed to regard himself as among the best of his fellow citizens. There was a rank and honor which belonged to those who had this dignity of Roman citizenship, and at that distance from Jerusalem there was an enjoyment of some privileges and a broadening of the mind which would not have been possible if Paul had been born at Jerusalem, even though he had been there a Latin and a Roman.

But it is not enough to speak of Paul as a Roman citizen. More than by his Roman citizenship was he characterized by the fact that he was a Jew. He was a Hebrew of the Hebrews. He was a Pharisee, and the son of a Pharisee. He was of the tribe of Benjamin, of the straitest sect of the Jewish religion; and, therefore, in his twelfth year, he appears to have been sent to Jerusalem for his education.

Having what could be gotten at Tarsus, and perhaps returning to Tarsus afterward for certain portions of his study, it would appear that from the age of twelve years a very large portion of his time was spent at Jerusalem. At Jerusalem the very highest advantages that the Jewish religion could afford were his, for he sat at the feet of Gamaliel, the greatest Jewish teacher of his time, and not only a great Jewish teacher, but a great man as well, as appears from the fragments of his teaching that are left to us.

He sat at the feet of Gamaliel; and at the feet of Gamaliel he seems to have made wonderful progress in the development of his ardent and enthusiastic religious spirit; for he states that he made progress in Judaism beyond all those of his own age, and was looked upon as the most promising of the rising young men among the Jews.

There is no doubt whatever that Paul was a man of ambition. His ambition was of a very lofty sort. There is not the slightest evidence that there was ever a spot or stain upon his moral character. His ambition was to attain the highest legal and moral standing; there was a constant effort at the doing of works of righteousness; he sought to gain the applause of his own conscience, and whatever earthly influence and power might accrue as the result of a noble and unblemished moral development.

There was in the character of the apostle Paul a remarkable union of energy and quickness of mind. He had not only acuteness of intellect, but with it firmness of will. He was not only a thoroughly blameless man in moral character, but a person possessed of an ardent and impetuous nature. He was a man of the warmest and deepest affection; and this union of intellectual power and emotional power is perceptible in every writing and in every speech which is left to us.

The apostle Paul was a great man by nature and a great man by training. He was a great man because in his mental composition there was not simply the intellectual element, but there was also the emotional element. He was greater than Peter, because he had a greater intellect than Peter ever had. He was a

greater man than John, because he had greater strength and energy of will than ever John possessed. And so by his character and natural composition of mind and heart, as well as by his birth and education, he was fitted for the special work which God had ordained for him, to be a bridge between the Jews and the Gentiles, fitted for the work of extending the Jewish religion, of freeing it from its husks, and making it the universal religion of the world. The apostle Paul was wonderfully fitted by natural temperament and by education for the peculiar work that God gave him to do; and yet, even though he united Roman citizenship with Greek culture and Jewish legalism, he never could have done the work that he did; he would at most have been famous as a liberal rabbi among the Jews; his fame would have been a narrow and local fame, if it had not been for that wonderful change that came over him on his way to Damascus, that wonderful change which turned the ardent and enthusiastic Jew into the greatest preacher of the gospel that this world has ever seen.

It would seem that at his thirtieth year Paul entered public life. It was at that time, apparently, that, in response to an inward impulse to do more than he had ever done hitherto, he undertook the persecution of the Christians. This impulse to do more than he had ever done, this longing to work out a righteousness of his own which should commend him to God, was parallel to that impulse that possessed the mind of Luther during so many years; and it would seem almost as if this impulse, this sense of dissatisfaction with himself, this desire to do something more than

he had ever done before, led him to seek an enterprise that had in it hazard and also something of faith; a perverted faith. In other words, he would prove that he was a Jew beyond all other Jews by his determined opposition to everything in the way of heresy, the new religion; and so he sought from the high priest the letters to Damascus, in which he was authorized to apprehend Christians and to bring them by force to the holy city for trial and punishment. But before that mission was executed an event took place which unquestionably had permanent influence upon the apostle's mind, and that was the martyrdom of Stephen.

Although Paul does not appear to have been an active participant in that martyrdom, as he only held the clothes of those who were stoning Stephen to death, yet there was something on the appealing face of that martyr as he looked up to heaven, something in that cry of Stephen, "Lord, receive my spirit," something in the calm with which the man who was just on the verge of death rejoiced in the presence of Christ and in the assurance that his spirit was going to be with him in glory; there was something in that scene which stirred the apostle's mind after Stephen's death, although he was not an apostle then, and which apparently—all the way on that journey to Damascus—was agitating his soul with the feeling that all was not right within, and was preparing the way for the manifestation of Christ's power to him in that supernatural light from heaven.

As he was nearing Damascus he was stricken down by a light that was brighter than the light of the sun; he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why

persecutest thou me?" and he cried, "Who art thou, Lord?" The answer was, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest; it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks," hard for thee to resist this inner stirring of the Holy Spirit, hard for thee to go on in this everlasting struggle of will against conscience. So a wonderful change took place. He bowed himself to this Christ, whose followers he had been persecuting; and the evidence of his submission was these words: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? I hear thy voice, from this instant I give myself to thee"; and the answer was that he was to go into the city, and it should be told him what he should do. There have been manifold attempts to explain this transaction upon naturalistic grounds. The two chief explanations that have been given are the explanations of Baur and Renan.

Baur would explain the outward from the inward, and he says that it was simply an intense and sudden conviction of the truth of Christian religion and of Christ's spiritual presence, that Paul translated into an outward scene and an outward event. The whole transaction was within. Unfortunately, we cannot translate the inward into the outward here, because this experience was not peculiar to the apostle alone. His companions with him heard the sound, heard the voice, though they could not understand the words. And Baur himself, at a later period in his life, was obliged to confess that the conversion of the apostle Paul and the effects that followed from it constitute an inexplicable psychological enigma, which is simply an acknowledgment that he has no answer or explanation to give.

Renan, on the other hand, would explain the inward from the outward, and he tells us that there was a sudden storm, that there was a flash of lightning, or that there was a sudden access of ophthalmic fever, which Paul took as a scene from heaven. Unfortunately for this explanation, it is utterly impossible for any mere outward event or scene, any mere outward transaction of that sort to explain the inward effects that followed. No ordinary sickness, no ophthalmic fever, no flash of lightning, no storm, would ever of itself be sufficient to change the persecutor of the Christian church into the greatest advocate of Christian religion that the world has seen; and the apostle Paul gives us very distinctly to understand that he knew the difference between inward and outward experiences. He was not the man to translate inward experiences into outward ones, nor outward into inward ones; because, on another occasion, when there was a very peculiar experience and he was caught up into the third heaven, he tells us, "Whether I was in the body or out of the body I know not." That transaction was one which he could not explain, but his experience on the way to Damascus was very different. Then he saw the living, risen Christ in bodily form, for he tells us afterward that, last of all Christ's appearances to his disciples after his resurrection, the Lord was seen of him also, and that constituted his authority in his apostleship.

It was necessary, in order to be an apostle, that one should have seen the risen Christ, and so should be a credible witness of his resurrection. All the apostles had seen Jesus Christ in bodily form after he had risen

from the dead. Nothing but the seeing of the living, risen Christ would ever have enabled such a monotheist as Paul to talk about Christ as being the fulness of the Godhead, bodily. Paul knew the difference between a vision and an outward, bodily manifestation of Christ; and he has maintained the distinction between those two with perfect accuracy and uniformity throughout all his writings.

This outward manifestation had a wonderful effect upon Paul. The inward experience, the revelation of his sin was only the accompaniment of Christ's outward revelation of himself to Paul. In the first place, this visible manifestation of the heavenly purity, that was ineffably glorious beyond the brightness of the sun, was the death-blow to all Paul's hope of legal righteousness. The instant he saw this Christ in his divinely holy manifestation he was like Isaiah of old, who, in the presence of the holiness of Christ, as we are told in John 12 : 41, put himself in the position of the leper and cried, "Unclean, unclean!" and in the position of Peter, who, when the power of Jesus was manifested to him, cried: "Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man!"

From that moment all idea of ever commending himself to the holy God by any works of righteousness that he had done or could do was dispelled forever; and in the place of hope that he could do anything or claim anything good in his imperfection and in his sin, there arose in his mind a new conception of the sacrifice for sin. Those old Jewish types in which he had been educated assumed an entirely new significance; this Jesus, whom he had been persecuting as a

false teacher, was the Messiah, was the Christ, was the divinely appointed sacrifice for sin, was God himself coming in human form and offering sacrifices for sin, to exhibit his justice and make possible the salvation of the lost.

Paul sees the sin, Paul sees the sacrifice for sin, and then Paul sees who this is that has offered this sacrifice: it is none other than the Son of God, the Saviour of the world, God manifest in the flesh. In connection with this there arises in his mind the idea of the universality of the salvation. If God has offered this sacrifice, if this Christ is the God offered upon the altar of sacrifice for human sin, then the validity of this sacrifice must be universal, not simply to the Jews, but to all the nations of mankind.

So from this point must be dated not only Paul's conversion, but also Paul's calling to his apostleship and to his work in the world, and to his understanding of the nature and meaning of that work. He comes, little by little, to see that God has called him to be an apostle to the heathen world, and he devotes himself to missionary labors. A man not strong in his physique, and with a malady upon him which requires the constant attendance of the physician Luke, he, notwithstanding, with a perfectly indefatigable zeal, with an absoluteness of devotion such as the world never saw before or since, devotes himself to the evangelization of the world.

He goes out in successive missionary journeys in wider and wider circles. First, a narrow circle through Asia Minor, then a wider circle through Asia Minor, and finally another one through Asia Minor into

Greece. From Corinth he looks out wistfully toward Rome, the center and metropolis of the world; and he longs there, among the masters of the world, to preach this gospel of Jesus Christ.

There is something magnificent in this life of the apostle! I do not wonder that Doctor Peabody, of Harvard College, when he attended, not long ago, the centennial celebration of the birth of Adoniram Judson, in Malden, Massachusetts, said in the pulpit that Doctor Judson, in his judgment, was the greatest man that had appeared on this earth since the days of the apostle Paul.

I wonder that it did not occur to Doctor Peabody, with his unwillingness to grant the absolute deity of Jesus Christ, I wonder that it did not occur to him that Unitarianism has never produced such a man as Judson, or such a man as Paul, and that the spirit of Unitarianism is a different spirit from the spirit of either Judson or Paul.

There was a doctrine to preach, now that Paul had found Christ. There was a doctrine to preach, now that Paul had come to recognize Jesus as the living God, and it was a doctrine for which he could sacrifice life itself when, at last, he went to his martyrdom at Rome.

I cannot tell the other steps of his life-story, and it is not necessary for my purpose; but how perfectly plain it is that when Paul comes to write his Epistles, all his natural character and all his Christian experience are wrought into them. These Epistles are Epistles of fellowship, you might say. The apostle does not stand upon a lofty elevation and talk down to those

whom he is addressing, but puts himself, so to speak, upon their level. They are letters of friendship.

I wish the word "letters" could be substituted for the word "Epistles," as applied to Paul's communications to the churches; for they are letters of Christian fellowship; and underneath and through them all there is the life of the apostle, so to speak, and the assurance that the Holy Spirit is with him in his speaking. There is constantly present and constantly manifest the throbbing of a warm and sincere heart, as well as the working of an energetic and organizing intellect.

It is necessary to say a word with regard to the church at Rome, to which this Epistle to the Romans was addressed. Rome, of course, was the greatest city and the greatest center of power in the world; and Paul, as he looked off toward the West and knew that from that city the greatest influences must emanate in future time, for the welfare of the nations to which he was called to minister, had longed for years that he might preach the gospel there also. But church after church was laid upon him, constituting a new burden of anxiety and care; and the personal relations between himself and those converted under his ministry were kept up year after year, so that he could speak of the burden of all the churches as one of the heavy things laid upon him by God. And yet his heart goes out beyond the churches to which he has personally ministered; and since he cannot instruct the Romans in their great center of influence and power by personal work and words, he feels it a duty to give them the gospel by written instruction, and so the Epistle to the Romans is written.

Paul, of course, was not the founder of the Roman church. Some have said that it was founded by those Jews and proselytes of Rome who were present at the day of Pentecost, and who went back, bringing the glad news to their fellow countrymen; but with regard to that there may be considerable doubt. It seems very likely to me that the church at Rome was founded by Gentile converts that had made their way there from Asia Minor, just as, at an earlier time, they had made their way to Antioch and afterward to Alexandria.

The tradition that Peter was the founder of the church at Rome is decisively negatived by this very Epistle of Paul. This Epistle of Paul cuts absolutely at the root of the historical basis of the papacy, because it is perfectly evident in this Epistle that Paul knows nothing of any previous work of Peter there. In all the salutations there is no allusion to Peter; and if the Epistle to the Romans had been written to a church of which such a person as the apostle Peter had been the founder, we may be sure there would have been an allusion to Peter's work and teaching. Letters of apostolic instruction to churches founded by other apostles were not according to Paul's rule. He never built upon another man's foundation. It was always new work that he did.

There is no reason to believe that Peter had ever seen Rome when this Epistle to the Romans was written, and therefore no reason to believe that the apostle Peter was ever a founder of the Roman church. Peter, if he ever did visit Rome, visited it after this time. It is just possible that after this time he may have visited it, and that he may have founded a church

there; and the fact that the succession of Roman bishops presents a double list at the very beginning may possibly be explained in this way: that there were two churches in Rome, and that the bishops of the one were bishops or pastors of the church to which Paul wrote, and the others were pastors of the church in whose foundation Peter was concerned. But even with regard to this there is no certainty at all. It is by no means certain that the apostle Peter ever visited Rome at all.

We do know, however, with regard to this church at Rome to which the apostle Paul wrote, that it was a church prevailingly of Gentile Christians, persons that were brought in from among the Gentiles and not from among the Jews. And yet they had with them, doubtless, many who were converts from among the Jews also. While the letter shows that the majority of believers among them were Gentile Christians, yet at the same time we cannot deny that there were also among them converts from among the Jews, and it was from the fact that there were those two classes in the church that one of the particular necessities of writing the Epistle arose. There were diversities of opinion between these two classes, and one of the objects of Paul's writing was to reconcile these two, bring about a compromise, induce a spirit of material consideration and helpfulness between them; and the fifteenth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans is written expressly with this aim.

The letter itself was probably written from Corinth, in the year 56, as Paul was on his third missionary journey, and was just preparing to go to Jerusalem;

and, therefore, before his imprisonment at Cæsarea and during those three months of comparative leisure and rest when Paul was at Corinth, when he had succeeded in reducing the difficulties and troubles of the Corinthian church and had, apparently, a period of rest and relaxation preparatory to the great trials that were just before him in his imprisonment at Jerusalem, his imprisonment at Cæsarea, and his trial at Rome.

So we come to what we have been aiming at all the time: the object of the Epistle to the Romans. What was the object of this Epistle? I have indicated that there were subsidiary objects, such as the reconciliation of these diverse opinions between Jew and Gentile Christians. Undoubtedly there were such subsidiary objects as this; and still, I think, when you look at the Epistle as a whole, you cannot doubt that Paul seized upon Rome and the writing of the Epistle to the Romans as a means of setting forth in more philosophical, more organic, and more complete form than ever had been attained heretofore, the gospel which he preached.

The facts of Christianity were at this time published for the most part only in an oral gospel, although our Mark, and the sayings of Jesus which Matthew incorporated, were already written. Paul was not so much concerned about putting these facts into written form, although a little later it would seem that he had some influence in the composition of Luke's Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles. But Paul was not a witness of the events of Jesus' life, and, moreover, Paul was called as an apostle after Jesus' death, with an obvious end in view. It was not without a

purpose that Paul had not been with Jesus Christ all through his life. He could see the life of our Lord as a whole, in a way that the first apostles could not.

It was necessary that the Gospels should be written by eye-witnesses and by those who had seen the eye-witnesses; but it was also necessary that a beginning should be made in reducing Christianity to a system. In this organizing of Christian facts into doctrine, the writer needed to be conversant with the results rather than with the events themselves. It was necessary, in other words, that Paul should have his peculiar mind and his peculiar religious and philosophical training in order to write the Epistle to the Romans, and the Epistle itself is therefore a semi-philosophical exposition of the Pauline Gospel.

We have here the summary of Christian doctrine as it appeared to the apostle Paul. Paul was perfectly capable of doing this, and he had special preparation for it. This will be more evident, I think, when you remember that in Ephesus, for two years, every single day Paul lectured in the school of the rhetorician Tyrannus. Can you imagine a man of the skill of Paul lecturing for two whole years, every single day, without having any plan for his discourses? You may be very sure that, in the mind of the apostle as he discussed these things, there was an order and a system. When he came to write the Epistle to the Romans all this was ready to his hand. As he wrote, it was inevitable that his material should be molded by his individual characteristics and training, and by the special purpose he had in preaching and lecturing about the gospel of Christ. And so we have in this

Epistle to the Romans an exposition of the truth of Christianity as it was preached by the apostle Paul.

But this does not absolve us from the necessity of showing what was the particular end and aim of this Epistle. Christianity was a broad thing. It took all the apostles to see Christianity and see Christ aright. Christianity and Christ were many-sided, and not one apostle, but all the apostles together were needed to see them in their various aspects. The apostle Paul represents Christ from his point of view, and that point of view is the doctrine of faith as opposed to the doctrine of works. The subject of the Epistle to the Romans is salvation by faith in distinction from salvation by works.

Right here there is an important remark which I wish to make, and which may correct some misapprehension you have had in the past. It is often said that the subject of this Epistle is justification by faith. That is only a part of the truth. To say that the subject of the Epistle to the Romans is justification by faith is to narrow our conception of the apostle Paul and his ideas of Christianity.

When you look at the Epistle to the Romans as a whole, you find that although the doctrine of justification by faith is one of the largest parts of it, it is only a part. The subject of the Epistle to the Romans is salvation by faith; and salvation by faith consists of two things: first, justification by faith; and, secondly, sanctification by faith. First, bringing in of the ship safe; and then, secondly, the making of it sound. It is one thing to bring the ship in after a tempest and moor it safely to the dock—that is justifi-

cation; but it is quite another thing to see that that ship is thoroughly repaired—that is sanctification.

Now the totality of salvation is the subject of the Epistle. Justification first, the securing of a new access to God, pardon, the remission of sin, outward favor, external justification; and then the renewal of the heart, the increase of right affections, the subduing of the whole man to obedience to Christ, and filling him with peace and joy, internal sanctification.

The whole man is included, and all God does for man is in view when the apostle writes. So you find that after Paul has introduced his letter with an apostolic introduction, and has defined his subject as the righteousness which God provides by faith, he goes on, first, to speak from the first chapter and seventeenth verse to the fifth chapter and eleventh verse, inclusive, of justification by faith; and then from the fifth chapter and twelfth verse to the end of the eighth chapter, of sanctification by faith. If this is all by faith, how can we explain God's calling of the Jews in times past, God's election, and their rejection? Two explanatory chapters, the ninth and tenth, are added to make that matter clear, and to show that the Jews have been cast off because of their own wilful unbelief, and that the Gentiles have been brought in in the fulness of God's mercy. And then, after this salvation by faith as coming from God has been set forth in its two parts of justification and sanctification, we have the ethical portion of the Epistle, with which the twelfth chapter begins; that wonderful portion which tells us how this gospel will manifest itself in practical life, and Christian perfection will reveal itself to the world.

"I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." What a source of gratitude that this doctrine is not a mere abstraction, not a matter of mere theory, but that it leads to a holy life! What that life will be is explained from the beginning of the twelfth chapter, and the rest of the Epistle is ethical as the first eleven chapters have been doctrinal.

Under the first head of justification by faith it was necessary for the apostle to show that such a thing was needed, because no one could ever be justified in any other way; and so, from the eighteenth verse of the first chapter to the twentieth verse of the third chapter, he shows the need of a divinely provided righteousness by proving that man could not work out any such righteousness by himself. The wrath of God rested both upon Gentiles and upon Jews.

See how Paul is simply reproducing his own experience, and is applying to all men just that truth of which he had been deeply conscious in his own soul; and having proved this, he says that God has provided a righteousness, a righteousness in Christ who is made an atonement for sin. Then you have the way in which the giving of this gospel to man absolutely excludes boasting and self-praise; and the proof that, even under the Old Testament, the law of salvation was precisely the same. Abraham was saved by faith just as we are. He cast himself upon the mercy of God when he had no righteousness of his own. There is something wonderful in this presentation of the gospel of Christ.

The great difference between men is not that one man is a sinner and the other is not. We are all sinners and we are shut up in sin. The question is quite a different one from that. Are you willing to recognize the fact that you are a sinner, that you are condemned and helpless and lost, dependent upon the free grace of God in Jesus Christ for your salvation? Are you willing to trust this provision of God's mercy which he has made in Jesus Christ? If you will not, if you set up your own righteousness and pride and trust to that, then you are surely lost, and just as surely lost as that you live to-day. There is the difference. He that will acknowledge himself to be a lost sinner and depend upon the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ, his crucified God, for salvation, is saved. If he is in a heathen land, and casts himself upon God's mercy, he can be saved even though he may not know of the name of the Christ who saves him.

There is a great deal of difference between heathen morality and Christian morality. Heathenism is man's vain effort to lift himself up to God. Judaism had in it something of the heathen element, and just so far as it had, Paul rejected it and cast it out. But while heathenism is man's vain effort to lift himself to God, Christianity is God's coming down to man and lifting him up to himself. Heathenism is the work of man's self-righteousness and pride; Christianity is the humble reception of salvation as the free gift of infinite grace to a lost sinner through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Now the object of the apostle Paul, his great object in writing the Epistle to the Romans, was to set forth this truth of universal significance, this truth which is

an article of standing or falling faith, of standing or falling salvation; and I have tried to set before you, in a very imperfect way, the order of its treatment. It simply carries out the one great aim to which the apostle Paul devoted his life, though he had been prepared for it by his own inner experience, namely, the aim of proclaiming to the whole world the gospel of salvation by faith, a salvation which included both justification and sanctification.

It is very remarkable that the apostle Paul, who, before his conversion, was the greatest enemy of Christianity, has become the founder of the great majority of Christian churches, for the churches that were founded by the Twelve have died out. Paul is the principal author of the New Testament; for, including Luke and Acts, which were probably written under his supervision and with his sanction, the major part of the New Testament may be attributed to Paul. Christian doctrine owes more to him than to all the other twelve apostles put together; and this Epistle to the Romans is the summary of Christian doctrine as given us by the apostle Paul.

Coleridge said of this Epistle to the Romans that it was the profoundest work in existence. Godet calls it the very cathedral of the Christian faith. It is the *magna charta* of our religion; and it is a wonderful proof that God can take even his enemies and can make them praise him. How can you explain this except by the supernatural power and grace of God?

There was a man named Julian who was educated as a Christian and professed Christianity; and then, under the influence of the Platonic philosophy, he gave

up his faith and spent all his days and all his influence (for he was emperor of the East) in waging war with the Christianity he had once professed. But at the last he felt that Christianity was too much for him, and with his dying breath he exclaimed, in agony and despair, "O Nazarene, thou hast conquered!" And here was the apostle Paul who, being the persecutor of Christianity, turned to Christ and became the greatest power in the world.

No other man has exercised in this world such influence as the apostle Paul, and that influence is beneficial beyond all expression to-day. Ah, let us not be broken like Julian, but let us bow like Paul!

THE EPISTLES TO THE CORINTHIANS

The city of Corinth, where the church was situated to which Paul wrote the letter, or the letters, which we are to consider this morning, was a place that had been wealthy and famous ever since the time of Homer. It was situated upon the isthmus, or just at the isthmus, that connected the Peloponnesus with the northern part of Greece. This isthmus constituted a sort of bridge from the south to the north, and from the north to the south; and all who went from the north to the south, or from the south to the north, by land, must necessarily go across it. This of itself made Corinth a place of great commercial importance; but then, besides that, it was situated between two seas. There was the port of Cenchrea on the east and the port of Lechæum on the west, both of which were the seaports of Corinth; and all the traffic from Asia to the West at one time passed through Corinth. It was much easier for the navigator and avoided doubling those difficult and dangerous capes at the south of the Peloponnesus; and so his goods were transferred from one ship to another, and the traffic made its way by sea.

I do not know that even this situation at the isthmus would have determined the rank and importance of Corinth if it had not been that it was marvelously furnished by way of defense. The earliest settlements have been determined by possibilities of defense. I suppose that the earliest Scotch settlements were at

Edinburgh simply because Edinburgh has a natural fortress, a great bluff, which could be easily defended. Just so the Acropolis at Athens determined the very early settlement at Athens, and just so at Corinth there was a great hill or bluff, higher than Gibraltar and quite as steep, one thousand, nine hundred feet high, which rose close to the sea, at the foot of which the city was built. This great bluff, or Acropolis, constituted a sort of a natural fortress and defense for the city.

Here were celebrated the Isthmian games, at which the enterprising of northern and southern Greece contended for the prize. Corinth was a city of great magnificence and splendor until the year 146 before Christ, when the Romans swept over Greece and the Consul Mummius took the city, totally destroyed it, and carried back from it to Rome the richest spoil that had ever been brought from the East. For one hundred years Corinth remained in perfect desolation, until at last, in the year 44 before Christ, Julius Cæsar rebuilt the city. He peopled it with a colony of Italian freedmen; and it is very curious that we meet, in the references to Corinth in the New Testament, a remarkable number of Latin names, which look exceedingly curious as you see them masquerading in Greek dress. The names, for example, of Caius, Quartus, Fortunatus, Crispus, and Justus are all of them Latin and yet they take the Greek form.

The colony of Julius Cæsar very rapidly grew. Merchants flocked to it. The Jews came there to trade, and the city had a marvelous growth, a growth that was like the growth of our Western American towns. From nothing, in one hundred years it had grown to

be a city of six hundred thousand inhabitants, of whom two hundred thousand were freedmen and four hundred thousand were slaves.

It not only grew in numbers, in wealth, and magnificence (for here were situated those temples built of stone to which Paul alludes in his First Epistle to the Corinthians), but it was also celebrated for its school of rhetoric and philosophy. There were workshops and studios, and all the evidences of exceedingly busy and active life; but with all the literary and philosophical advantages of the place, with all its schools for rhetoric and oratory, there was also an esoteric luxury and licentiousness. Corinth was one of the very worst cities of the ancient world.

From the top of that Acrocorinthus of Corinth, one thousand, nine hundred feet high, there shone far off upon the Ægean Sea and upon all the surrounding country of Greece, the magnificent temple of Venus, where a thousand priestesses were consecrated every year to immorality; and the names "Corinthian banquet," "Corinthian drinker," and "Corinthian girl" were synonyms for all that was defiled and base. It was in Corinth, you remember, a little later than the time of which we are speaking to-day; it was in Corinth and with the sights of Corinth before him that the apostle Paul wrote the first chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, with its terrible list of the infamous doings of the heathen. It was here that the gospel was to make its inroads; it was here to be determined whether the gospel of Christ was as able to subdue and to bring under its dominion the license of the heathen as it was to subdue and put away the Judaistic yoke. That first

entrance of Christianity into Corinth was forever memorable. More is told us with regard to the beginnings of the church in Corinth than in regard to the beginnings of the church in almost any other place. Here was a city in many respects like our modern cities, a city of exceedingly intense commercial life, a money-getting and a pleasure-loving place, a place that was at once exceedingly vicious and exceedingly refined. What a question it was, whether the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ could win triumphs in such a city as this!

It was in the year 52 of our era, twenty-four years after the ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ, and at about the forty-fifth year of the apostle's life, toward the close of his second missionary journey, or during his second missionary journey, that the apostle Paul first found his way into the city of Corinth. This great immoral city was entered by Paul as a solitary tent-maker. We do not know that he had a single friend or a single acquaintance in the place. All we know is that he found a certain Jew by the name of Aquila, who, with Priscilla his wife, had been banished from Rome by the Emperor Claudius. A decree had been passed expelling the Jews from Rome; Aquila and Priscilla, his wife, found their way to Corinth, and here they began work at their trade. Their trade was the same as Paul's.

Every Jew, however high-born he might be, however well-to-do he might be, was taught his trade. It was said among the Jews that he that did not teach his child a trade did teach him to steal; and so Paul all through his missionary life was dependent, at least at times, upon the work of his own hands. He went into

the workshop with Aquila; he sat side by side with him, we may believe; he worked with him upon the same bench, and won him to the faith of the gospel. This was the slight beginning of the great church of Corinth.

After a little, Paul was emboldened to go into the synagogue and preach Christ there. His spirit was stirred within him; he was under a sort of transport; the Holy Spirit moved him mightily to speak for Christ to those of his own nation. He had just come from Athens. His mission at Athens had been a sort of failure. He had preached to the philosophers, and the philosophers had turned a deaf ear to the gospel message. He was over-burdened; he was full of care; he felt his powerlessness and helplessness to contend with the great powers of this world and the evil of man; he tells the Corinthians that when he came among them he resolved that he would know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified. In other words, he would not trust to human philosophy, he would not trust to human oratory, he would not trust to eloquence, he would not trust to speculation; but he would declare with the utmost simplicity the truths of the life of Christ, and would trust to the power of God alone to give effect to his words.

He entered the synagogue, he proclaimed Christ; and a few serious hearts were deeply impressed and were gained for the Christian faith. Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, was one of them. But Paul's preaching ere long provoked violent antagonism from the Jews. It was impossible for him to continue his work there; and declaring that he would turn to the Gentiles,

he left the synagogue and began his preaching in a house close by, belonging to a Gentile proselyte named Justus; and there, from that time, the meetings of the church were held. Large numbers from the middle and lower classes of the population, both Jews and Gentiles, but mainly from the Gentiles, were brought into the Corinthian church.

Paul labored there for a whole year and a half; and when at last the Jews, provoked by his success, sought to arouse a tumult against him and brought him before Gallio, the proconsul, who was, you remember, an exceedingly moderate and equitable man, the brother of Seneca, a philosopher of Rome, Gallio declared he would have nothing to do with these matters, and drove them from the judgment-seat; but Paul, anticipating further difficulty and hindrance in his work, and thinking it best, temporarily at least, to depart, made his way to Asia Minor and on toward Jerusalem.

After this departure of Paul, we know little with regard to what happened in the Corinthian church except by way of inference. It seems that a man by the name of Apollos, a Jew of Alexandria, a man who was eloquent and mighty in the Scriptures, but who had never been fully instructed with regard to the Christian scheme, who knew Christianity only from what he had heard from the disciples of John the Baptist, came to Ephesus and began to preach the gospel there. Aquila and Priscilla had, in the meantime, made their way across the Ægean Sea to Ephesus and were residing there. When they heard Apollos expounding the truth as he understood it, they, having had better instruction from the lips of Paul, saw that Apollos needed

further light; and they began to expound the gospel to him as they had heard it from the apostle Paul. Apollos, learned and eloquent as he was, seems to have been a docile hearer. Priscilla was apparently the one who did the most of the talking and preaching to Apollos; for you find that Priscilla's name is a number of times mentioned first, as if she were the one who, by her sympathy and by her interest in Apollos, had done the most to bring him to a better understanding of the Christian faith.

After Apollos had been thus instructed, these new friends and instructors of his thought there was an excellent opportunity for him to do work for Christ in the Corinthian church; so they sent him with letters over to Corinth, and Apollos supplemented there the work of Paul.

It is easy to see that Apollos was a man of different mold from Paul. Paul had preached with the utmost simplicity; Paul had preached fundamental truth; Paul had not used the arts of oratory or the methods of philosophy; those whom he had gained he had gained simply by a deep inward conviction of the truth. The preaching of Apollos was more showy than that of Paul. It won a new class of persons, a class of persons, we may believe, who were not so thoughtful, who were not so thoroughly instructed when they came into the Christian church. They were more commonly from the class that had been accustomed to attend the heathen schools of oratory. It was a more superficial impression that was made upon them. The eloquence of Apollos and the philosophical art with which he expounded the Scriptures made its impression upon them.

The result was that a different class of persons, to some extent, was brought into the Corinthian church; and naturally those who were later brought in, under the influence of Apollos, and who had known very little with regard to the preaching of Paul, were inclined to pay great respect to the new preacher, under whose influence they had received the gospel. And as they found some differences of temperament and of feeling, and some differences of method between the older members of the church and themselves, it was very natural that there should spring up a party feeling in the church and that some should say: "I am of Paul; I am one of the constituent members of the church; I am one of those who were brought in under the original preaching of the great apostle"; and then the others would say: "I belong to the party of Apollos; I was brought in under the influence of this great and eloquent preacher of the gospel."

We have no reason to believe that this party division was encouraged by Apollos himself. We have every reason, on the other hand, to believe that it was not; but Apollos speedily took his departure, and the result was that there were two parties left in the church, which, to a certain extent, began to antagonize one another. We read also of a party of Cephas. Some think there was a visit of the apostle Peter to the church; but I do not know that we can be certain with regard to it. Then we read of a party of Christ. Some think there were emissaries from Jerusalem, who claimed to have special relations to Christ, and to have more authority even than the original Twelve. At any rate, it is perfectly plain that after a few years the

church at Corinth was divided into parties, and that party strife and party feeling had already done much to hinder the work of the gospel.

It was at this time, about five years after the original foundation of the church, in the spring of the year 57, that Paul, after having been to Jerusalem, started out on his third missionary journey and came to Ephesus. At Ephesus he remained for two or three years. He lectured daily in the school of the rhetorician Tyrannus. Toward the close of that time the church in Corinth, in perplexity with regard to some matters which they did not know how to decide for themselves, sent a letter to the apostle Paul, asking for his advice, but not mentioning all the real difficulties that existed in the church. That letter, however, was supplemented by the information that was given by a woman named Chloe, a member of the church at Cenchrea, who came across to Ephesus, and who informed the apostle Paul with regard to other troubles in the church which needed the exercise of his apostolic authority; and Paul, feeling that there was great danger of all the fruits of his year and a half's labor being swept away, sat down and wrote to the church at Corinth the First Epistle to the Corinthians—that great Epistle which is next to the Epistle to the Romans in its practical value for us among the Epistles of the New Testament.

The object of this Epistle was quite different from that which Paul had in mind when he wrote his Epistle to the Romans. In writing to the Romans, whom he had never seen and who had never heard his preaching, his object was to set forth in a semiphilosophical treatise the way of salvation, the doctrine of

Christ—not so much the facts of Christ's life, because they existed in the oral gospel, which I suppose was familiar to the Christians at Rome; but the way of salvation, the system of Christian doctrine just so far as it had to do with the justification and sanctification of man; but when Paul wrote his letters to the Corinthians he did not need to set forth the way of salvation as he set it forth to the Romans, because he had preached at Corinth for a whole year and a half, and they were familiar with his general doctrine.

They did need something very different. They needed to have particular difficulties removed. They needed to have some of their important questions settled; and so the Epistles to the Corinthians dealt more with casuistry, dealt more with questions of conscience, dealt more with practical matters. In other words, they seem to proceed from a pastoral mind and heart, rather than from the mind and heart of a teacher of doctrine; and that is the great difference between the Epistles to the Corinthians and the Epistle to the Romans. The Epistle to the Romans gives us mainly the doctrine of Paul. The Epistles to the Corinthians deal with questions of practice. Paul treats these questions in no superficial way, but in the most fundamental way. He makes each particular difficulty, each particular trouble, the occasion of elucidating a fundamental principle, so that there is no compromising, no settling of the case upon mere grounds of expediency. In every instance Paul goes to the very root of the matter, and decides the case in such a way that it is a decision not only for the church of Corinth at that time, but a decision for all churches in all times

thereafter. I do not mean that the exact application of the principle which Paul makes to the Corinthian church is necessarily the exact application which we are to make of the principle to-day; but I do mean that Paul, in deciding the questions that arose in the Corinthian church, gives such an exposition of the principle that applies to that case that we, taking that same principle, may make our own application to the peculiar circumstances of our own day.

Now, the First Epistle to the Corinthians treats a great variety of things. There are ten important and difficult questions with which Paul has to deal. They are questions so vague, and they are questions that require so much of wisdom to decide, that, as you review them one after another, and as you see with what skill, with what discretion and far-sighted wisdom the apostle determines them, it seems of itself to be proof that he was ordained and inspired by God.

Take this matter, for example, of party spirit. Parties among the Corinthians had a sort of half-idolatrous regard for special ministers or leaders of the church. Paul decides all this matter by bringing to mind the nature of the gospel, and by showing that the gospel brings us into absolute allegiance to Jesus Christ, brings us into direct relations to the Lord. We have personal dealings with a personal Saviour. Christian ministers? What are they but servants of Christ whose object is not to bring us into allegiance to themselves, but to bring us directly to the Saviour that we may bow at his feet and consecrate ourselves entirely to him! Therefore he is the greatest minister of the gospel who is the most of a servant, who puts himself

most completely out of sight. "Paul may plant, and Apollos may water, but it is only God who gives the increase." So Paul gives us a proper idea of the relation between the minister and the church. The church is not to think that because it has had the advantage of the services of a certain minister of Christ, therefore it is to give a sort of idolatrous reverence to him. On the other hand, it is to reverence the Lord and to recognize the minister as the servant of the church for Jesus' sake. Therefore the reverence that the Corinthians were tempted to give to the servant he urges them to transfer to the Lord.

Here is a principle of vast importance, of permanent application. How important the application of it is to-day! How many people there are now who, in going into the church, go into the church as followers of the minister rather than as followers of Christ, and who, therefore, when the minister changes his place, are utterly lost to the church and the cause. This same principle which the apostle Paul has laid down to the early church in this Epistle to the Corinthians would meet very many of our church difficulties to-day.

Now, the second great difficulty that the apostle Paul had to meet in the church of the Corinthians was the difficulty of immorality. There were three different immoral things with which he had to contend. There was a particular case, you know, of shameful irregularity in the case of an incestuous person; and the church is exhorted to meet together, to excommunicate the man, and to clear its skirts of his iniquity. Then there is the matter of lawsuits before heathen judges. Christians had come to take their

disputes before the heathen tribunals, instead of showing consideration and love for one another and submitting these disputes to the brethren in the church. Then there were matters of impurity which were the natural sequence of the former impure heathen life which so many of the Christian converts had previously led.

Paul treats all this with the utmost discretion, with the utmost delicacy; and in each case he gives us a fundamental principle which is sufficient to settle the whole matter and to restore harmony and union in the church.

There is a question with regard to self-denial, a question with regard to meats, the use of meats offered to idols. You know, in those heathen cities, where there were great heathen temples, almost all the animals that were slain for food had, before they were slain, been presented at an idol temple as an offering to the idol. Some portion of the animal was laid upon the altar, or presented to the priest, and then the rest was taken to the market and sold. Many a Christian convert, especially those who were converted from among the Jews, had a scruple of conscience about eating the meat that had been consecrated to a heathen god, and the consciences of the weak were injured by the practice of some who ate such meat.

The apostle Paul declares that although the meat in itself did not harm, and the mere fact that it had been offered at a heathen altar did not in any way harm it, at the same time if his eating this meat made his brother to offend he would not eat any more while the world stood. He would not set an evil example before another that would make him stumble and fall. Love

for Christ should induce him to deny himself in some of these things which it was perfectly right for him abstractly to partake of. It was almost impossible in a city like Corinth to get any meat at all that had not been offered to an idol. It was a serious practical question as to where one was to get this staple article of food, so long as he could not partake of the meat offered to an idol. Paul tells us that the meat is the same, whether offered to an idol or not; any man can partake of it so long as he does not violate the conscience of another; but let Christian love be the main determining element in the case.

There was a matter with regard to marriage. Some of the Jewish converts were inclined to taboo marriage entirely, and to hold, in a sort of ascetic way, that it was a wrong thing for man to marry at all. Paul settles this matter also by declaring that marriage is a divine institution; that although there might be reasons which made it inexpedient to marry, there was no ordinance against it; and that, moreover, in many cases marriage was the desirable and natural and proper course on the part of Christian converts.

The apostle comes to certain other cases which we may call cases of disorder in the church. There was a practice which women had, or were beginning to have, of coming into the assemblies of the church unveiled. In Corinth it was customary for women as they went in public to be veiled. It was the custom of the East, and it is the custom of the East to-day.

When I went to Beyrout, in Syria, I attended the chapel of the American Mission there, and Doctor Thompson, the author of "The Land and the Book,"

preached a sermon. I went into the audience-room and sat down in one arm of an ell. The room was a double one, and it had two arms. The pulpit was in the angle between the two, and right before the pulpit, diagonally, was a curtain. I took my seat among Jews, Arabs, and Europeans, and the singing and the prayer proceeded. When they began to sing I found what I had not before suspected, that the part of the audience where I was, was only a small part of the number actually there, for beyond that curtain and in the other arm of the ell many women were assembled. They sang just as we men sang in the part of the room where I was, but the men could not see the women, and the women could not see the men.

That was a Christian congregation, only a few years ago, in a city in which women and men were entirely separated in worship, out of respect to that old fashion of the East. To this day in the streets of Beyrout and Damascus women cannot go unveiled except at the risk of exposing themselves to public reproach and of being stoned. Now, what is true to-day in the cities of the East was true in Corinth at the time of the apostle Paul. But Christian women, possessed of the new freedom which belonged to them in Christ, began to think they might transgress some of these laws of discretion. They came into the assembly of the church unveiled, and participated in the meeting as men would do. Now, the apostle Paul settles that matter by referring to the modesty and subordination of the female sex. He declares that it is not right for a woman to transgress these bounds; and so he applies the principle to those times and circumstances.

The principle of modesty and subordination is just as obligatory to-day as it was in the time of Paul; but the application of the principle may be very different in our day from what it was in the days of the apostle. Modesty and subordination to-day may not require all that it required in those days. It is not a breach of modesty or propriety for a woman to go unveiled to-day in the street or in a place of public worship. It would be no breach of modesty or propriety to-day for a woman to cut her hair; but in the days of the apostle Paul he forbade it, because it was at that time a breach of the principle of modesty and subordination.

So with regard to spiritual gifts. The apostle rebukes those who are inclined to make more of the showy gifts than of those gifts which minister to public instruction. He rebukes the disorder which attended the celebration of the Lord's Supper. When we think that the Corinthian church, in celebrating that sacred ordinance, was guilty of such disorder, such rudeness, such want of consideration, we can hardly believe that it was a Christian church at all. Let us remember that they were half-heathen yet. They had come into the Christian church with many of their heathen habits and heathen notions, and it was a long time before the religion of Christ could absolutely sweep away these relics of a heathen past.

Last of all, the apostle treats of the doctrine of the resurrection. Many of those who had been accustomed to speculate could not understand how there could be a resurrection from the dead. Paul first declares the fact. He declares that if Christ has not risen, then our hope is vain; and if Christ is risen from the dead, then

we who belong to Christ shall also rise. Christ's resurrection is the pledge of the resurrection of his people; and Paul tells us that that resurrection is a resurrection to spiritual life. We are to have a spiritual body, by which I suppose he means not a body which is spirit, which is a contradiction of terms, but a body that is perfect, a body swift in movement as the light, and, notwithstanding, composed of material elements. The mystery of resurrection is not, by any means, solved, nor is it shown how the thing may be; but he tells us that God can and will work this wonder for his people.

Now, the apostle leaves his letter to produce its proper result. He goes on with his work. But his heart is deeply burdened; he longs to know the result of this instruction. Will this Corinthian church obey his teaching? Will it give up this party spirit? Will it harmonize its differences and accept his doctrine? All this rests like a burden upon his heart; and when the uproar occurs at Ephesus and drives him out, he goes to Troas, trying to get a little nearer to Corinth. In order to learn the news he sends Titus to Corinth to enforce his instructions. Learning nothing at Troas, he goes on to Macedonia. There Titus comes to him, bringing news that the Corinthians had received his letter as the very word of God; that they had excommunicated the incestuous person; that they had submitted themselves to his commands; and that the main sources of difficulty and trouble had been removed.

His deep anxiety was suddenly changed to overflowing joy. He sits down and writes the Second Epistle to the Corinthians at Philippi, about six months

after the first had been written. In that Second Epistle to the Corinthians the very heart of the apostle Paul pours itself out in gratitude and love, and in thanksgiving to God for what he had wrought in the church of Corinth. After the first part of the Second Epistle, devoted to this expression of gratitude, has been written, he passes on to urge them now, as a token of their thankfulness to God, to partake in a contribution which he is making up for the church at Jerusalem. He wishes to carry back to Jerusalem a last token of his regard for the mother church, from which all these churches through the world have sprung, and he wants to engage the members of the church at Corinth in the work of making up this collection.

Then he devotes the last portion of the Second Epistle to urging his claims upon those who still resist his authority, for there were some bitter Jews who still resisted him, and he warns them that when he comes to them, as he shortly will, he will show that he is strong in his personal presence as well as strong in his letters.

These two Epistles to the Corinthians are wonderful Epistles. They show the apostle's wisdom, but then they also show the apostle's heart. There is a gentleness and tenderness in them that is marvelous. I do not wonder that Lord Littleton called the apostle Paul the finest gentleman that ever lived.

Think of the church at Corinth. How the apostle trusted them, and what courtesy he showed them! He wants them sanctified in Christ Jesus. That was what they ought to be, that was their normal condition. Paul knew there were many good souls among them

that longed for nothing but the coming of God; and he groups them all together and speaks of them as Christians and sanctified in Christ Jesus.

It is a beautiful illustration of the way in which Christians ought to take people at their best, have a high consideration for them, make allowance for their failures, take it for granted that they intend to do well, and then urge them to be faithful to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS

We study to-day the Epistle to the Galatians. Galatia constituted a large part of central Asia Minor. It had large cities—Pessinus, Ancyra, Tavium, and Iconium. At Pessinus there was the temple of the goddess Cybele, the most widely revered of all pagan divinities; and at Ancyra there was the temple of Augustus and Rome. But the Galatians, to whom the apostle wrote his Epistle, were not scattered through all that Roman Province of Galatia; they belonged to the region of the Gauls, in the northwestern part of Galatia. With Moffatt, in the "Encyclopedia Brittannica," 11 : 394, I hold to the North Galatian, rather than to the South Galatian, theory as to locality.[1]

It is very interesting to observe that Galati and Gauls are the same thing. Galati, Galli, Gauls are all one. It may surprise you at first to have these people in northwestern Asia Minor identified with the Gauls of France and the west bank of the Rhine; but so it is, and modern ethnological and genealogical research has brought this fact to light. This fact helps us very much to understand the Epistle which we are studying to-day.

In general we may say that the migration of nations has been from the east to the west. Wave after wave

[1] Moffatt's words are: "The identification of Gal. 2 : 1–10 with Acts 11 : 28 f., and not with Acts 15, appears quite untenable, while a fair exegesis of Acts 16 : 1–6 implies a distinction between such towns as Lystra, Derbe, and Iconium on the one hand, and the Galatian χώρα with Phrygia upon the other." Moffatt's view is also held by Schmiedel, in his article on Galatians, in the "Encyclopædia Biblica"; and by Gilbert, in his "Student's Life of Paul."

went westward from Central Asia, until at last each wave broke upon the coast of the ocean. Wave after wave went westward, but there were some refluent waves. There was occasionally a backward movement. Although the tide generally flowed from the east to the west, there was occasionally an ebb-tide; and such an ebb-tide in this advance of population gave rise to the settlement of this portion of Asia Minor by the Gauls. Repulsed perhaps by the chilly climate and almost impenetrable forests, some of these Gauls turned back from the west bank of the Rhine and marched in a southeasterly direction, probably in order that they might find a warmer climate and more fertile soil.

They were warlike and freedom-loving; they made their attempt to conquer Greece; and from Greece they were repulsed. Having been repulsed from Greece, they seem still to have pursued their march in a southeasterly direction until, invited by Nicomedes, King of Bithynia, in Asia Minor, they crossed the Hellespont, conquered the central portion of Asia Minor, and there took up their permanent abode.

These Gauls, half-barbarians as they were, were the scourge and terror of Asia Minor for almost half a century; but Greeks settled among them in so great numbers that the region began to be called Gallo-Græcia. And Jews settled among them, because this country was in direct line of the caravan route from the East to the West. The Jew had ever in mind the purpose of trade. The Greeks and the Jews gradually mixed with the original Gallic and barbarian population, until at last they became more quiet and civilized and more settled in their habits.

This invasion of which I have spoken, and the conquest of central Asia Minor by the Gauls, took place in the year 280 before Christ. A century after that time, having become much more civilized and probably considerably less warlike, they were subdued by the power of the Romans in 187. They submitted to the Romans, and in the year 26 before Christ this region became the Roman Province of Galatia.

This fact of the Gallic origin of the Galatians throws a good deal of light upon the characteristics of the people. The Gauls were modern French. The French are the representatives of the ancient Gauls. It is astonishing how national types persist not only from one generation to another, but from one century and from one millennium to another. From the very beginning the Gallic nation has been noted as impulsive and inconstant. Cæsar spoke, even in his day, when he came in conflict with them in Gaul, of their mobility and levity of mind. In other words, they were distinguished then, as they have been distinguished ever since, for instability and fickleness. They had what has sometimes been called the fatal gift of fascination. They were mobile of temperament, they were attractive in manner, they had gifts of eloquence, they were easily impressed; but, alas, they very quickly lost the impression that had been made upon them, and they were also prone to peculiar kinds and forms of religion. Cæsar, in addition to what I have said with regard to their natural characteristics, declares that they were a race excessively devoted to outward observances. In other words, a spirit not too persevering and rather superficial, easily excited and moved, was

more prone to accept the outward forms of religion than it was to take strong hold of its inner substance; and so we find that from early times down to the present that race has been noted for its love of showy and ceremonial observances, for its willingness to follow the lead of hierarchy, for its submission to the external claims of priests, and for its domination by a self-glorifying spirit.

These being the characteristics of the Galatians, those ancient Frenchmen, we can see how peculiarly adapted the soil was for the seed that came to be planted in it.

A few words with regard to the early history of the church in Galatia will be necessary, in order to understand the Epistle which Paul wrote. It is very surprising that in the Acts we have almost no mention of the apostle's first visit to Galatia, and we have absolutely no mention of his second visit to Galatia. Luke tells us simply that they went through the region of Galatia; but he does not tell us that Paul preached there, nor does he tell us that any churches were founded there. Is this silence on the part of Luke (which substantially is the silence of Paul, of whom Luke is the interpreter) due to the fact that the church so soon and so quickly swerved from the truth, and made both Paul and Luke willing to say just as little about it as possible? So it may be. At any rate, it is mainly from the Epistle to the Galatians itself that we know the circumstances under which the church was originally founded.

It seems that during Paul's second missionary journey, in the year 51 or 52, the apostle, not from any

desire of his own, but quite contrary to his will, was detained in this region of Galatia by a serious illness. It is exceedingly probable that he found shelter and nursing in some Jewish family; and since a man like the apostle Paul felt that he was a debtor both to the Jew and the barbarian, there can be no question whatever that he began to preach. And although it was not his intention to remain there long, his preaching seems to have been accompanied by the power of God, and both Jews and Gentiles began to be converted to Christ; in fact, they received his gospel with great joy; and the apostle, in the Epistle to the Galatians, looks back to that time, to his first warm reception among them, with the deepest emotion. He makes mention of their earnest love for him, and their willingness, if it were necessary, to pluck out their own eyes and give to him.

Some have thought that the "thorn in the flesh," with which the apostle was afflicted, was a continuous and painful disease of the eyes, so that it could be said that his bodily appearance was weak; and some have connected this disease of the eyes with that vision of the Saviour on the way to Damascus, when the glory of the Lord smote him on the face and there was left, even upon his physical system, such a sign or mark of this miraculous turning of the apostle to God as was a permanent reminder of what he had been in the past, and of the great change that had come over him.

He says in the Epistle to the Galatians, "You would have plucked out your own eyes and given them to me." Some think we have an allusion to the very trouble or malady with which Paul was afflicted when,

at the close of the Epistle, he says: "Ye see with how large letters I have written unto you with my own hand." The subscription of the letter is written by the apostle himself, whereas all the earlier portion of the Epistle is written by an amanuensis. Paul only certifies that the Epistle comes from himself and no other. In spite of his eyes he writes the last words of the Epistle; but, because of this trouble with his eyes, he writes with a large hand, just as one does that is partially blind.

Whatever may have been this "thorn in the flesh," and whatever the value of this explanation which I have given, it certainly is true that the apostle was laid aside there for some time; that he preached the gospel there; that he was received with the utmost gladness; that he made many converts. Those converts were probably first of all from among the Jews. The nucleus was a Jewish nucleus; and afterward there were many converts from among the Gentiles.

Paul visited this same church two years after, in the year 53 or 54; but we infer from certain passages in the Epistle to the Galatians that he was received with comparative coldness on his second visit; that he recognized certain evil tendencies in the church, against which he was compelled earnestly to warn the Galatian Christians. But it was not until he reached Ephesus, and began his three years' stay in that city (which lasted from the year 54 to the year 57), and not until some time in the year 54, a number of months after he had taken his departure from Galatia at his second visit, it was not until then that news came to him that, in spite of his urgent warnings and his recent visit, a

large number of these Galatian Christians had given way to Judaizing teachers who had come among them, trying to persuade them that they must be Jews first in order to become real Christians. The whole church, indeed, was in danger of going over to the enemy and of permanently forsaking the Christ. These Judaizing teachers claimed that they were the special representatives of the Twelve; they claimed that Paul was not a real apostle, because he was not one of the original Twelve, and had not had personal intercourse with Christ in the flesh; and their opposition to him was violent opposition. They claimed that, in order that one might be an equal member in the church of the Messiah, and be a full partaker of the benefits of the Messianic salvation, he must be incorporated with the people to whom the Messiah came. In other words, they claimed that he must be circumcised, must submit himself wholly to the Jewish law and become a Jew, in order that he might be truly a Christian. And all this was an entire contradiction and direct disobedience to the decree of the Apostolic Council at Jerusalem.

Such news as this from Galatia must have stirred the apostle's heart. He felt that all his work there was being undone; he felt that those who were engaged in such preaching, and those who were yielding to their influence were casting behind them all faith in Christ, and in danger of losing their souls. So Paul writes to the Galatians this Epistle, which is intended to check these errors and bring back his converts to the truth.

The Epistle, then, was written about the year 54, perhaps in the early part of the year 54; written, therefore, two or three years before the Epistle to the

Corinthians was written, and even before the Epistle to the Romans was written. And yet the object of the Epistle was to touch almost the same general point of controversy that is treated in the Epistle to the Romans. Some one has called the Epistle to the Galatians a rough draft of the Epistle to the Romans. Another one has said that the Epistle to the Galatians is a study of a single figure which was afterward, in the Epistle to the Romans, wrought out into a group. Each of these statements gives a comparatively correct idea of the relation of the Epistle to the Galatians to the Epistle to the Romans.

But there is a better illustration to be drawn from the course of a stream which has its origin in the mountains. You can imagine a mountain torrent going down from rock to rock and dashing its way along through ravine and gully, with tremendous force and energy, and then at last gliding with comparative calmness and quietness through the open plain. The same strength of doctrine, the same strength of tone which, in the Epistle to the Galatians, is like the tremendous, rushing mountain torrent we see making its way smoothly through the Epistle to the Romans as through the open plain. The stream is the same, the doctrine is the same; but the manner of utterance in the one case is very different from the manner of utterance in the other. The characteristics of the Epistle to the Galatians are quite different from the characteristics of the other Epistles of Paul.

In the first place, there is a oneness of purpose in the Epistle to the Galatians that you find in scarcely any of the other Epistles. There is one subject from

the beginning to the end. Indeed, it differs exceedingly from the Epistle to the Corinthians. In that Epistle there were at least ten different practical matters, practical errors, which do not seem to have been connected by any common basis of falsehood; and the apostle had to treat them one by one; but here among the Galatians there was just one error which he had to meet, and he devoted himself to that from the beginning to the close.

Again, this Epistle to the Galatians is characterized by a uniform severity, such as you find in no other Epistle of Paul. It is very different, for example, from the Epistle to the Philippians. In that Epistle, with the exception of a few slight cautions, you find almost nothing but commendation. He would have the love of the Philippians abound more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; and he would repress certain tendencies to disunion and jealousy among them; but yet, on the whole, the Epistle to the Philippians is a commendatory Epistle; there is almost nothing in the church which he would reprove. But this Epistle to the Galatians contains no commendation. There are no salutations and there is almost no praise; there is almost continuous reproof from beginning to end. And yet, notwithstanding this comparatively uniform severity in this Epistle, the severity is mixed with tenderness. There are no personalities; there are no personal allusions in the way of reproof. No names of false teachers are mentioned; and, every now and then, the apostle's reproof seems to break into a tone of fatherly affection and remorse that is exceedingly pathetic. He says: "My little children, of whom I

travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you." He seems almost to speak from a breaking heart, and the tears seem to fall as he writes, so that, in speaking of the severity of the Epistle, it is evident that it is the severity of a loving heart. It is all meant to bring them back to Christ.

What the effect of the Epistle was we do not know. Whether the Galatians repented of their errors and gave up their wrong views we do not know. The last we know of them is what is told in the Epistle itself. As a matter of fact, we find, in church history, that that portion of Asia Minor was in after times a sort of nursery and hotbed of heresy. The Montanists, Ophites, Manichæans, Sabellians, and Arians had their strong advocates and defenders there. And yet the Christians could not have been entirely rooted out, because we also have evidence that here, in these several churches of Galatia, many Christians endured persecution bravely, and many of these very churches made a brave fight in the last struggle between Christianity and paganism. So we may believe that, although some fell away to their destruction, Christian faith did not wholly die out, and the apostle's letter was not absolutely in vain.

With regard, now, to the course of thought in the Epistle. There is a course of thought, and it is very marked, although the unity of the treatment is singular, distinguishing this Epistle, perhaps, from all the other Epistles of Paul. There is one aim and object in it all: namely, to show that it is not by law, not by works of righteousness that man can do, that he is to be saved, but simply by faith in Jesus Christ.

The apostle treats his subject in three different parts, and those parts are so nearly coincident with double chapters that they are very easy to remember. There is, first, the personal part—a personal narrative; there is, secondly, a doctrinal part—he enforces his doctrine; and then, thirdly, there is a hortatory—or admonitory part. The personal part occupies, roughly speaking, the first two chapters; the doctrinal part occupies the next two chapters, and the hortatory part occupies the last two chapters; and since there are only six chapters in all, you can see that the Epistle is divided into three parts of two chapters each. But in this rough way we can remember it more easily. There is just this qualification: The first part does not end at the end of the second chapter, but it does end at the fourteenth verse of the second chapter. That is all the qualification that would have to be made. You must begin the second part then, the doctrinal part, with the second chapter and fifteenth verse; but, with that single exception, this rough division will be a perfectly true one.

In the first part of the Epistle the apostle gives a personal narrative, and what is the object of it? Why, the object is to vindicate his apostolic authority. He claims that he himself has been called of God; that being called of God, he has the authority of God in his work (that, of course, was necessary in dealing with the Galatians); and that those were false teachers who were leading them astray. He shows that he received his gospel directly from God, through Jesus Christ, and that he did not receive it from the Twelve, the original apostles. He did not receive it from man at all. It came to him by the revelation of Jesus Christ,

and he shows that the Twelve recognized this fact. He went up to Jerusalem and the Twelve did not assume any authority over him, as if they were his superiors and had sources of information which he had not. He shows how, of the Twelve, James and Peter, the pillars of the church at Jerusalem, gave him the right hand of fellowship; recognized his perfect equality as an apostle of Jesus Christ; and bade him Godspeed in going to the Gentiles, as they were to work among the Jews. And then Paul shows how he suffers nothing in comparison; that the apostle Peter at one time, when he was at Antioch, plainly went astray, not by preaching wrongly, but by refusing to follow his own teachings; that he, Paul, rebuked Peter to his face, and that Peter had to put up with the rebuke and had to change his course. In this way Paul proves plainly that he was not inferior to Peter, but was on a level with the very chief of the apostles.

Having proved his divine calling and apostolic authority, he can go on to the second portion of his Epistle, the doctrinal portion. His object is to show that man cannot be saved by law, or obedience to law, or works of law, but must be saved by simple faith in Jesus, by laying hold of Jesus Christ the only Saviour of the sinner. He declares that the law is not intended to be the way of salvation for sinners. It might be a way of salvation for man if he had not fallen and he were perfectly able to obey it; but just so soon as man has sinned he cannot come up to the standard of the law, and he cannot be saved by his own works. And as he cannot be saved by law he must be saved simply by faith. After he has fallen into a state of sin, the

law is given him simply to reveal to him his sin and lead him to Jesus Christ.

An illustration which occurred to me many years ago will make this very plain. The law is our schoolmaster to lead us to Christ. Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one who believeth.

Some years ago I went on a sleeping-car to Detroit. I awoke in the morning, after a night's sleep, and I found the car had stopped, and we seemed to have reached the end of our journey. I arose; I went out of the car; and to my immense astonishment I found that the car was right on the edge of an abyss. We were on a dock; our car was on the rails, and the rails went right to the edge of the water. There they stopped. A little movement might have precipitated us into the river; and I wondered that we should be in such a position, until I saw a great ferryboat coming up to the dock. On the boat there were rails, and the rails on the boat matched the rails on the dock. Our car was pushed over on the boat, and the boat and car together went across the Detroit River. In a little while we were in Detroit. That boat was the end of the track for getting us over the river; and just so Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. Just as that track on the dock depended on the boat as the only way by which it was to be completed, just so the law, with its track laid down for us to run on, points to Christ, its completion, as the only thing that can furnish the end toward which it looks. The law can never save us, any more than the rails on the dock could have gotten me over the river to Detroit. The law can never save me, but Christ can. The

law points me to Christ, and the object of the law to the sinner is simply to show him that he cannot save himself, and that he must look to Christ alone for salvation.

The last portion of the Epistle, the hortatory portion, sums all this up, and tells men that if they turn their backs upon Christ then they turn their backs upon salvation; that if they give themselves up to the law as the way of salvation they will be under obligations to do everything that the law commands; that they cannot be saved at all by law without perfect obedience to God; and that no one can present such perfect obedience. Then there are mentioned harmony, love, forbearance, and patience, as duties of the Christian, and with the mention of these the Epistle is closed.

Is it not a singular fact that there was such strife in the early churches with regard to doctrine? I have sometimes thought these strifes were permitted in the early church in order that we might have less strife among us; in order that some questions might be settled once and for all; in order that we might be freed from trouble and perplexity with regard to them.

Baur, the skeptic, thought Christianity itself originated in this strife. Ah, no; there was strife simply because there was something to strive over; there was a historical gospel for which Paul was fighting; and the strife originated simply because there was error coming in, which threatened to reduce to a new slavery those who had found liberty in Christ Jesus.

And so Luther found in this Epistle to the Galatians, upon which he wrote his celebrated commentary, his

chief engine in the great Reformation in Germany. He was so attached to this Epistle, it seemed to him so to express his own heart, he felt so deeply the value and need of it, that he called the Epistle to the Galatians "his wife." It was something as dear to him as life, something to which he was bound for all time; and he made the Epistle to the Galatians the source of a very large portion of his texts and his sermons.

In every generation of the Christian church there have been those who have been prone to precisely the errors that Paul is inveighing against in this Epistle. Ritualism everywhere is a revival of the evil which Paul denounces in the Galatians. Ritualism in its essence is the putting of some work, or ordinance, or performance of man, side by side with the simple work and power of Jesus Christ, as a means of salvation. Ritualism is some external ceremony, or ordinance, or work that man can do, as an addition to the one perfect sacrifice and atonement of Jesus Christ.

It is a very curious fact, is it not, that these two Epistles, the Galatians and the Romans—these anti-Judaizing Epistles—were written to precisely those people whom history has shown to have had the greatest tendency to these errors? Now, the Romans was written to whom? Why, to the Romans. And who is it, in history, that has been the greatest exponent of this Judaistic tendency, this putting works side by side with Christ as a means of salvation? Why, it is the Roman church. Paul seems, by prophetic insight, to have recognized where this tendency was to be the strongest, and so to have written his Epistle against this tendency to the Romans.

And, again, the Epistle that strives to win men over from inconstancy and fickleness to simple trust in Jesus Christ is written to whom? Why, it is written to Frenchmen. It is written to the Galatians, for the Galatians were the early French, the Galati, the Gauls.

The nations which have shown the strongest tendency to these errors are just those which Paul has singled out to be the object of these Epistles.

Remember the Old Testament law is outlawed. Men cannot be saved by works. Why seek the living among the dead? Why go back to the sepulcher in order to find our Christ? The Christian has a new life in Christ Jesus; and it is a new life given to us upon the simple condition of trusting in our risen Lord. Faith in him, and nothing but faith in him, is the way of life and salvation; and, therefore, what we need most of all is to take to our hearts this one great lesson, that unless we trust in Christ we can have no peace inwardly and no certainty of salvation. If works must mingle with Christ's methods as the way of salvation, no one can possibly have a sufficient and solid ground of confidence, because no one can point to works that are absolutely perfect.

Let us, then, once more confirm our faith in Jesus Christ, and in the sole efficiency and sufficiency of his way of mercy and salvation, by our study of Paul's Epistle to the Galatians.

THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS

The city of Ephesus, where the church was situated to which this letter was written, was thirty miles south of Smyrna, in Asia Minor. It was surrounded on three sides by mountains, and upon the west there stretched away the blue waves of the Ægean Sea. Ephesus was situated upon a plain five miles long by three miles broad. It was in the way of commerce from the East to the West, from Asia to Rome. It had become, long before the time when our Epistle was written, a very great and rich and powerful city.

The remains of a theater which was open to the sky have been exhumed in these modern times, and the stone seats of that theater would hold an audience of thirty thousand men. But the most remarkable distinction of the city was that which made Ephesus to be Ephesus, as much as the university makes Oxford to be Oxford, the magnificent and vast temple that was erected there to the goddess Artemis, or Diana. The goddess, half Greek and half Oriental, was represented in the court of the temple by a strange, misshapen idol of many breasts, indicating the nutritive and productive powers of nature. That temple was one of the seven wonders of the world. It was four hundred and fifty feet long by two hundred and twenty feet broad. There was a colonnade of Parian marble, each column of which was sixty feet in height, and each of these was the gift of a prince. There were

treasures of sculpture and painting there, such as existed almost nowhere else in the known world. Ephesus was the gathering-place of strangers from every clime. There were all kinds of schools there. It was a place of rhetoric and philosophy; and it was in this place that the apostle Paul in one of his early journeys stayed for one single Sabbath day.

On his second missionary journey, as he made his way back to Jerusalem, he made only a brief stay with Aquila and Priscilla. When they begged him to stay longer, he said that he could not at that time, but if God willed he would come back. There he left Aquila and Priscilla, who doubtless did good work among the Gentiles, and went back to Jerusalem. After three months more he returned; and as his first visit was in the year 53, his second visit was in the year 54 of our Lord. Then he made perhaps the longest stay that he ever had made up to that time in any single city of the Gentiles. He was for three months preaching in the synagogue; and when it was not possible for him to preach longer there without great opposition and difficulty, he betook himself to the school of Tyrannus, a Greek rhetorician, and there conducted his lectures, or preaching services, for two whole years. His whole stay in Ephesus, as he tells us afterward, lasted for three years.

His preaching was followed by very great success. Multitudes became disciples of Christ. He had greater success in Ephesus than he had had in any other heathen city; and the work went on until the powers of heathenism around him began to be shaken. Those who had been devoted to magical arts brought their

books of magic and burned them publicly, so that the value of the books thus burned amounted to fifteen thousand pieces of silver, or between seven and eight thousand dollars, a testimony to the reality of the conversion of those who sacrificed so much for the cause of Christ.

But this very success aroused opposition. He tells us afterward, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, of his fight with beasts at Ephesus. There is but little doubt that this fight with beasts was metaphorical. There was no general persecution at that time, and it is not possible that Paul could have been thrown to the lions in any amphitheater. The fight with beasts was evidently his conflict with the bitter and subtle enemies who were constantly upon his track. The Jews lay in wait for him. He was opposed by the silversmiths of the city, whose business was making and selling silver shrines, or miniature temples, in the likeness of the temple of Diana. Their trade was almost taken away, and they rose up in a mob and riot and drove Paul from the town. A little while afterward, going to Miletus, the seaport of Ephesus, he calls the elders of the Ephesian church, and there we have one of the most affecting events of Paul's career. How tender was the love between him and them, that pathetic scene bears witness. Paul gives them his last instructions. He kneels with them on the seashore and prays for them. He commends them to Jesus Christ, their Saviour. He tells them how, for a space of three years, he ceased not, day or night, to warn men, preaching to them publicly and teaching from house to house. The evidences of affection between Paul and his converts are

very marked. He leaves them at last, goes on his final journey to Jerusalem, and sees Ephesus no more. Paul apparently puts the church in charge of Timothy; when Timothy is taken away, it seems to have come under the direction of the apostle John, who writes to them one of the letters addressed to the seven churches in Asia. That is the last we read of the church in Ephesus in sacred history.

The Epistle to the Ephesians was undoubtedly written from Rome, and was written in the year 63, just ten years after Paul's first visit to Ephesus. Circumstances had greatly changed with the apostle. The time of his public unhindered work was now at an end. He was in a Roman prison. His imprisonment was not very stringent, it is true. He had his own hired house; and yet he was chained, chained by his right wrist to a soldier, and this soldier by his left wrist was fastened to him. So every single word that Paul wrote of these Epistles—the Epistle to the Ephesians, the Epistle to the Philippians, the Epistle to the Colossians, and the Epistle to Philemon—every word that was written of all that group of Epistles during Paul's first Roman imprisonment, must have been written with the heavy load of a chain weighing upon his hand. Very naturally and affectingly he speaks of himself as "the prisoner of Jesus Christ." He does not attribute his imprisonment to human powers or enemies; he considers it as ordained by the Saviour; he bears it for him; he writes and works "in a chain," as the words in the Greek literally signify.

Though he was chained to that soldier in his own house at Rome, he had opportunity of receiving all

who would come to him. He preached the gospel with all the more success because of the difficulties that surrounded him; and the gospel made great headway in the imperial city.

He had long periods of meditation; in his confinement he meditated over the great truths of the gospel as never before; and the Spirit of God unfolded to him the inner significance of those truths as never before. As he looks back to Ephesus, where God had given him his most wonderful success in the preaching of the gospel, and to that church that had received him with open arms, and where God had shown the greatest depths of his power, his heart goes out toward them, and his desire is to give them this new blessing which he himself has received. This larger knowledge of the truth he is bound to communicate to the disciples of Christ; and, as he cannot publicly preach to them the word, as he is divided from them by continents and seas, he will do what he can do, he will give to them the truth by letter. So we owe to Paul's imprisonment, and the larger unfolding of the truth of God which was made to him in his imprisonment, the most wonderful of the letters which were written by Paul.

This Epistle to the Ephesians is chief among all the letters of Paul for the profoundness of its exhibition of Christ's truths: truths set forth here that are set forth nowhere else with the same power. Coleridge thinks it is "the divinest composition of man"; and there can be no question that the depths of God's mercy and love were never set forth in any human composition as they are set forth here.

The object of Paul is to show to these converts who

have been brought in from heathenism, how wonderful are the privileges that have been conferred upon them in the gospel, and how solemn are the duties that devolve upon them as the servants of Christ. As Paul treats of the privileges of believers in Jesus Christ he is carried beyond himself. The first chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, and in fact the larger portion of the Epistle, reads like a solemn hymn.

It is liturgical, and at times it is psalmodic in its manner. There is a glow to the thought, and there is an exaltation to the expression, that make it surpass all the Epistles of Paul for sustained fervor and majesty. It begins by saying, after the salutations: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before him in love"; and then goes on, little by little, until the apostle's great prayer is uttered. He prays God that they may have the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, that they may know what is the hope of their calling and what the riches of the glory of their inheritance in the saints and what the exceeding greatness of his power in those that believe, according to the working of that mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principalities and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named both in this world and that which is to come, and hath put all things under his feet and given him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

Now, there is a rhythm and a power in these words such as you find almost nowhere else. Ellicott, the commentator, declares that the genitives in this Epistle in the Greek tax the resources of Greek syntax to the very uttermost. When interpreting it we require all the helps that syntax can possibly give; simply because the apostle, in the greatness of his thought, struggles with earthly language. Language staggers, so to speak, under the weight of meaning he would lay upon it. In this Epistle to the Ephesians we have one of the greatest productions of inspiration, an Epistle which we can read for the first time and be deeply impressed by it; and yet it is only the tenth or twentieth or hundredth reading that lets us into the secret of its power. It is an Epistle that commends itself not so much to the immature as to the mature Christian; an Epistle which requires an inner spiritual life and the broadest Christian experience for its understanding. Renan, the French skeptic, can condemn it for its useless repetitions and verbosity; but he only shows thereby that he utterly lacks the inner spirit that can enable him to understand it. No Christian can read it without believing that it was inspired of God.

There is an aspect about that Epistle at the beginning which differentiates it from every other Epistle. In some of the very earliest versions, the words "in Ephesus" are lacking, so that it reads: "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God to the saints that are," and there it stops; the words "in Ephesus" are left out. It has been a great puzzle to commentators to know precisely what this means; how it is that

in some of the earliest copies the words " in Ephesus " have been lacking; and some have thought that this Epistle was a sort of circular letter, that it was written for many churches and not for one, and that there was a blank place left there so that it could be filled in for the church at Laodicea, for the church in Ephesus, for the church in Smyrna, and so on. There are certain things in the Epistle which lend at first a little plausibility to that view.

For example, the doctrine of the Epistle is general. It is doctrine that applies everywhere, and to all conditions of Christians, and to Christians of every name. There is not the particularizing that there is in many other Epistles. There is nothing like the salutations to individuals; there is nothing like the definite direction of the Epistle to ethical ends, such as we find in Paul's other Epistles.

It has therefore been urged by some that the Epistle was not written to the church of Ephesus particularly, but that it was written to all the churches as a sort of general Epistle, like the general Epistles of Peter or the general Epistles of John. I think, however, that this is a mistake. The testimony of the early church is perfectly unanimous that this was an Epistle to the Ephesians. Although, at first sight, it does seem strange that Paul, to this church where he was best acquainted and where he must have had the most friends, should not have mentioned the names of those friends or have given his greeting to them; yet we find a parallel to this in the letters to the Corinthians. He was with the Corinthians perhaps the next longest time. He was with the Corinthians certainly two years, and

there were multitudes of friends there. Yet, in his letters to the Corinthians, we do not find these personal allusions and salutations. May not the reason have been just this, that he had too many friends there; that, if he had begun to express his salutations to one and another, there would have been no end to it? He could have drawn no line. There would have been no place to stop. As a matter of fact, we find that those Epistles have the most of personal allusions and salutations which were written to churches where Paul never had made a personal visit. As, for example, to the church at Rome. We have a great number of personal salutations there, and in the letter to Colosse we have a great number of personal salutations there; but at the time that Paul wrote these two Epistles he had not visited either place. We must remember, besides this, that the letter to the Ephesians was sent by Tychicus, a dearly beloved brother, and these personal salutations may have been sent by him. So, as there was a living messenger taking the Epistle to those to whom it was written, it might have been much easier, and it might have been, on many accounts, much better, that these personal messages should have been sent orally by him.

Taking all things together, it is better to give credit to the testimony and tradition of the early church, which is unanimous that the letter was originally addressed to the Ephesians, and simply to say that Paul intended the letter for the benefit of the church in Ephesus primarily; but that he also intended it to be communicated to other churches, and therefore gave it such a general form that it was capable of being so

communicated. He did not limit it to one particular church even by salutations that accompanied it, so that it was just as good in all its parts for one church as it was for another. Yet it was directed, first of all, to the church at Ephesus that he dearly loved, and he trusted to their love and care to see that from them it should be communicated to others.

Now, the subject of this Epistle to the Ephesians is perhaps the greatest subject that can engage the mind of man. It is this, "Christ, the head over all things to his church." The letter to the Ephesians and the letter to the Colossians have been called twin Epistles; and it will be very useful to carry in mind the relation between the two. They treat different aspects of the same great truth, viz., the relation of the world to Christ. The Epistle to the Ephesians treats of Christ as the head over all things to the church. The Epistle to the Colossians treats of Christ, the head over all things to the universe. And so the twin Epistles are supplementary to each other. We need the two to present this truth in its fulness and roundness.

The Epistle to the Ephesians then sets forth the greatness of Christ; and the apostle does this by dividing his statement, as he commonly does, into a doctrinal part and into a practical part, and here the division is in the middle of the Epistle. There are six chapters; the first three of these have to do with the doctrinal part, and the last three have to do with the practical part. In the first three he would set forth the infinite privileges that belong to the believer in Christ, to him who has Christ for his living head, to him who is a part of this vast temple of God which Christ is erecting

in the ages. And then the last three chapters, the practical part, urge Christians to walk worthily of this high calling which they have received; in other words, set forth the duties which belong to those who have been so privileged. Privilege then comes first; duty comes last; and they receive a perfectly equal treatment. Three chapters are given to the one, and three chapters are given to the other.

The first part of the Epistle, the doctrinal part, sets forth Christ, the head over all things to the church, in three special ways. The church is first said to be chosen in Christ, and the first chapter is taken up with God's everlasting choice of those who are united to Jesus Christ. It is not a choice that has taken place for the first time during our earthly life. As the ardent lover said once, in a novel, to the lady whom he was seeking to win: "Why, dear, I have loved you ever since I set my eyes upon you as a child!" God says to us something better than that. He says, "I have loved you with an everlasting love." We are said to be chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. In the depths of eternity past God fastened his eyes upon us, and chose us in Christ, that we should be holy and without blame before him. It is an eternal choice of God that has brought us into union with Christ and has made us Christians. The first chapter, then, is taken up with the fact that the church is chosen in Christ from the eternity past.

The second chapter shows that the church is redeemed in Christ, and there the apostle refers them to their past state as "alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise,

having no hope and without God in the world." Then he tells them how, in Christ, they have been redeemed; how the death of Christ has become, as it were, their death; how they have been raised from the death of trespasses and sins, and have been built into a living temple, in which God dwells by the Spirit, an allusion perhaps to that magnificent temple of Diana of which I spoke. The apostle leads their imagination to a far greater and nobler spiritual temple, in which each Christian is a living stone laid by God and inhabited by the Spirit.

As we have in the first chapter the church chosen in Christ, and in the second chapter the church redeemed in Christ, so we have in the third chapter the church provided for by Christ, endowed with the gift of the apostleship, gifted with religious instruction, and so disciplined and prepared for the final heavenly state. All are urged to test this wonderful power and grace of God, "the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God." So we have Christ head over all things to the church, head over all things even in eternity past, head over the church in his redeeming work, head over the church by providing it with its leadership and its various gifts.

Upon this doctrinal basis the apostle builds the subsequent hortatory portion of the Epistle; and so we have in the last three chapters an account of the various gifts of grace that are bestowed upon Christians; we have the various orders and offices of the ministry; and then we have general Christian duties, and especially the duty of having in everything the right spirit. In other words, the internal graces of

the Christian character are unfolded; and we are shown how, now that we are Christians and in Christ, it is not the fruits of our old evil nature that we are to bring forth, but the fruits of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance; and we are urged, if we have fallen away at all, to awake, to arise, and Christ shall give us light. So we are exhorted to live in conformity with the calling which we have received from Christ, our Lord.

Having detailed these general Christian virtues, which we are exhorted to bring forth, Paul goes on to special duties—the duty, for example, which the wife owes to the husband. There the duty is enforced by the mention of Christ's union with the church; and the relation between the believer and Christ is illustrated by the marriage relation between the wife and husband. Children are exhorted to be obedient to their parents, and servants (or slaves, as the word might be translated) are exhorted to be obedient to their earthly master, seeing in the will of their earthly master the will of their greater master, Jesus Christ, who will give the reward at the last, even though earthly masters fail to reward. And then, last of all, after the exhibition of these Christian duties, there comes a representation of the conflict between good and evil in the world, in which we are to participate and to stand for God. It is told us that our warfare is not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers, the spiritual rulers of this world of darkness. In other words, a host of evil influences are arrayed against us; and we are to put on the whole armor of God that we may not be put

to shame, but that we may stand until the very last; and, while the conflict is set before us, at the same time we are assured that, in this Christ who is our head, there is given to us a complete and perfect victory. So we have the headship of Jesus Christ over all things to the church carried out, first doctrinally, in such a way that we see the everlasting character of it; and then practically, in the effect which these wonderful privileges of the Christian ought to have upon his righteousness and holiness of life. The church is something larger and more spiritual than a local body of believers or an outward organization. This is the most churchly Epistle in the New Testament; and yet, in this most churchly Epistle, we have least with regard to ritual, with regard to discipline, with regard to details. The ideal character of the church, the universal kingdom of God, so fills the apostle's mind as to swamp, as it were, all thought of the local and the individual. It is the essential relation of the believer to his Lord, that which constitutes a Christian and which makes possible a church, that he has mainly in mind. The matter of ordinances and of discipline he will attend to at other times. Now he busies himself only with this vast conception of the church as a whole, the spiritual body of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

But it is very interesting to observe too, that while the apostle speaks of all sorts of duties that belong to the Christian, there is not one that he does not enforce by the highest motive. There is no appeal to any sordid or interested motive. There is no urging of performances of Christian duty simply for the happiness that will come to us, or for the sake of the good

even of those around us; but our thoughts are continually lifted up to Christ. For Christ's sake we are to do all. We are not to lie one to another, and why? Because, in Christ, we are members one of another. It is as absurd for us to be telling lies one to another, as it would be for us to attempt to deceive ourselves. And then we must not steal from one another. That is forbidden, and why? Simply in order that we may do good to the body of Christ, that we may have that which we may give to another. We are to work and to win, in order that we may be helpers to others who are members of the same body with us.

And so when we come to the more spiritual graces, Paul urges us to show faith and all the other Christian graces, simply because they are the natural expression of the Spirit of Christ within. The words "in Christ" appear in this Epistle more frequently perhaps than they do in any other Epistle of Paul, and you cannot read the Epistle intelligently without understanding their meaning. They constitute the key to Paul's Epistles in general, but they especially constitute the key to this Epistle to the Ephesians. "In Christ" means in living union with Christ, the personal, risen, living Saviour, and Paul sees in Christ God revealed. He takes literally those words of Christ himself, "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father."

If you want to know what God is, look at Christ. There you have the very manifestation of God in human form; and, therefore, we have in Christ the ideal of our human life. We are to be like Christ. Whatever there is in Christ is to be reproduced in us. Whatever Christ did, he did not for himself alone, but

did it for us also. Therefore, we are said to have died together with Christ; we are said to have been buried together with Christ; and we are said to be raised together with Christ and to be seated with Christ in heavenly places; to have suffered together with Christ; and to be glorified together with Christ. In other words, the apostle sees in Christ the germ of the redeemed humanity that God is to bring back to himself. We are in Christ, and we are so united to Christ that Christ's life is in us. Whatever Christ is, whatever Christ has, is made over to our account, so that all things are ours. Whether life or death, things present or things to come, all things are ours, because we are Christ's and Christ is God's. The great thought of the Epistle is Christ, the head over all things to the church, God manifesting himself in humanity, and lifting us up by union with Christ into his own great life, so that all blessings are ours in him.

How vast the conception of the Epistle! How full of comfort and strength to the Christian! Let us study it faithfully, and let us recognize the fact that all God's exceedingly great and precious promises are ours.

THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS

On the northernmost shore of the Greek Archipelago, as it is now called, or of the Ægean Sea, as it used to be called, was the city of Philippi. If you look upon the map you will see that northward from this northern shore of the Greek Archipelago there stretches a great rocky barrier, which separates now, as it did then, the Turkish peninsula from the Greek peninsula, and which separates the region of the East from the region of the West.

Here, at Philippi, that great rocky barrier, as it approaches the sea, was depressed, and there was a narrow plain; upon that plain, at a distance of about ten miles from the sea, Philippi was situated. Certain gold mines in the neighborhood and certain mineral springs had early led to the settlement of the place; but it was chiefly the fact that this depression in the hills, between the mountains and the sea, constituted a sort of gateway from the East to the West that led Philip of Macedon to fortify the place about three centuries and a half before Christ, to build a city there, and to distinguish that city by giving it his name. The city of Philippi, therefore, was so called because it was founded by Philip of Macedon, the father of Alexander the Great.

The great importance of the place as a sort of strategic key led, in the year 42 before Christ, to the world-renowned battle of Philippi, one of the world's

decisive battles. Augustus and Antony on the one side, and Brutus and Cassius on the other, fought there for the empire of the world; and you know how Shakespeare has commemorated that struggle in his play of Julius Cæsar.

The conqueror in that battle, Augustus, led by the same reasons which I have intimated already, made Philippi a Roman colony; and by a Roman colony I mean a city that is settled by Romans who have been brought from Italy, who have brought with them their municipal organization, who are governed by a senate of their own, and who have all the rights and privileges of Roman citizens. This Philippi is a Roman city, on the very confines of the Roman world; that is, on the very confines of that world where the Latin language is spoken and taught.

In the little narrative with regard to Philippi which is preserved to us in the Acts of the Apostles, all these various classes of population are more or less represented. There, first, is the original barbarian element; secondly, there is the Greek element; thirdly, the Roman element; and finally, the Jew. We have here at Philippi a sort of strategic point for the gospel, as well as for the empire of the world; for here we have a confluence of Eastern and Western life, a strangely mixed population, and a remarkable regard paid to the rights and dignities of Roman citizenship. Here it was that Christianity first came in contact with Roman civilization. Here was fought for Christianity a battle more important than that battle of Philippi, in which Augustus and Brutus fought for the mastery of the world. You remember that the apostle Paul, on his

second missionary journey, desired very much to complete what he must have thought of as the evangelization of Asia Minor. There were other regions of Asia Minor which he yet desired to visit. He wanted to enter Bithynia; but you remember that the sacred writer says, "the Spirit suffered him not." He was driven, as it were, by his own inner impulse, and by the direction of divine Providence, to the northwestern portion of Asia Minor, until he came to Troas, the point from which he would naturally, if at all, pass over into Europe. I can imagine that the prospect of passing over into Europe and into an entirely different civilization from that to which he had been accustomed caused him a great deal of trepidation. It was only the voice of the man of Macedonia, "Come over to Macedonia, and help us," that finally determined him to take his way to Europe.

Here, in Philippi, was the first conflict between Christianity and European paganism; and upon the decision of that conflict great things depended for Christianity in the future.

In every city he had visited heretofore, Paul had always gone first to the synagogue of the Jews; but here, in Philippi, there was no synagogue of the Jews. There were Jewish people there, but they were very few. It was a Roman population instead of a Jewish population. Since there was no synagogue, the Jews who were there, not having any regular place of meeting in the city, conducted divine worship outside, in a secluded place, in the open air, by the side of that rushing river upon which the city was built. Those who visited this place of prayer were not Jewish men;

they were Jewish women, and apparently these women were themselves few in number.

But Paul went out there upon the Sabbath day; and as he spoke to them with regard to the gospel of Christ and the fulfilment of the promises of the Messiah in the Old Testament, the Lord opened the heart of one of them, Lydia by name, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, in Asia Minor, so that she attended to the things that were spoken. She might have listened and gone away, and thought no more of it, if the Lord had not imparted to her a new bent of mind, a new disposition to receive the truth. Receiving the truth, she became Paul's first disciple; and the fruits of her discipleship were new Christian hospitality. She received Paul and his fellow workers—for I suppose, at this time, Timothy, Silas, and Luke also were with him—received all four of them into her house, and her house became a rendezvous and a starting-point for missionary effort in the city. Paul remained there many days, it is said. Probably this means a number of weeks, or even months. He preached the gospel until at last attention began to be attracted to him. People began to know who he was; and now we find that a Greek divining girl, a girl who was possessed by an evil spirit, and pretended to prophesy, a sort of Greek fortune-teller under the influence of the satanic power, followed Paul and Silas as they went through the street, half mocking, perhaps, and yet perhaps half inclined seriously to recognize the power that was in them. The Greek girl cried, as she ran: "These men are the servants of the most high God, who came to teach us the way of salvation." That continued day

after day until, at last, Paul turned and commanded the evil spirit to come out of her, and the evil spirit did come out. The result was that the masters of this slave girl, finding that the hope of their gains was gone, and that they could no longer use her for their purpose, fell upon Paul and Silas, roused a mob against them, and brought them before the magistrates. The magistrates ordered them to be scourged, put them in prison, confined them in the innermost dungeon, and made their feet fast in the stocks. So the magistrates seemed to side with this riotous element in the Roman population.

It has been questioned by some why Paul, who was a Roman citizen and who had a right to be absolved from all such punishments as scourging, did not urge his rights as a Roman before the scourging took place; and some have thought that the reason was just this, that this was his first visit to a purely Roman city. Paul, it is said, was in a place where Latin was the prevailing language; it was impossible for him, under the circumstances, to make himself known, and to get the hearing of the magistrates; it was only after the thing was really done that he was enabled to make an effective protest. However that may be, we know that it was an occasion of the mighty exercise of divine power; in the middle of the night there was an earthquake; the doors of the prison swung open, and Paul and Silas were permitted to go free. The jailer came with fear and trembling, fell down before Paul and Silas, and asked what he should do to be saved. The appearance of these men, whose backs had been lacerated by the Roman scourge, still rejoicing and singing

praises to God at night, was something so strange as to attract his wonder. Conviction of sin had already been awakened in his heart; he longed to know the God whom these men preached; and he earnestly asked how he might find the way of salvation. The answer was that he was simply to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and he should be saved; and, believing right then and there, he received baptism, and was added to the number of the Christian church.

This miracle seems to have worked in behalf of the truth, and to have made a deep impression through the town. By declaring himself a Roman citizen Paul secured release, and so intimidated the rulers of the city that they were anxious to get rid of him in order that there might be no report of their proceedings carried to Rome. More than this, Paul and Silas seem to have been so helped in their work that a large number was added to the church. When Paul leaves Philippi we find him speaking of "the brethren," though the church began with only a few women—yes, with only one. The church of Jesus Christ had been founded in that place, and that church was one of the most beautiful illustrations of Christian love and joy and confidence and successful labor that we read of in all the annals of the New Testament.

We find that Luke, who, up to this time, for quite a little space has used the word "we" of himself, the apostle, and his companions, now ceases to use the word "we" in describing Paul's journeyings, and seems to intimate that he himself, the writer, was left in Philippi. It is only when Paul goes back again to this same Philippi—a long time afterward—that Luke

begins again to use the word " we," and goes with Paul afterward in his journeyings. The inference has been that Luke was left in Philippi by Paul, to take charge of the church until Paul returned on his third missionary journey, after which he followed Paul to Rome. If this be the case, it shows how greatly blessed, efficient, and discreet pastoral care may be. In this church the new converts from among the heathen passed for a number of years under the instruction and supervision of Luke. This furnishes us with some explanation of their faithfulness, the uniformity of their Christian character, and the depth of their love and joy. Tertullian says that this church was one of the few that were eminent for preserving autograph apostolic letters, by which I suppose that this letter to the Philippians was kept among them as a sacred treasure.

The church at Philippi seems to have been characterized by some very remarkable qualities. Paul, in writing his letter to them, has almost nothing to blame. It is the one letter of all the apostolic letters in which you will find almost no censure at all. There is a great deal of commendation. The apostle can commend, first of all, their faithfulness and their devotion in the midst of persecution. The persecution which vented itself upon the apostle seems to have been continued in the case of the disciples whom the apostle won; and yet, in spite of that persecution, the church at Philippi remained firm; firm in its faith, firm in its love. Though they were poor, yet they seem to have contributed very largely, in proportion to their means, to all manner of Christian enterprises; and they were especially characterized by affection and devotion to the apostle

himself. You know that the apostle did not wish to lay upon the new church that he founded the burden of his support. He preferred to earn his own living by his trade of tent-making; and yet, occasionally, it was very desirable that he should have the time to himself for Christian labor. It was the contributions of this church at Philippi which enabled him to take his time for Christian work. When he came to be imprisoned at Rome, there was a great deal in the way of comfort that might be purchased for him by the pecuniary assistance that came to him from others. It was this church at Philippi that again and again, as he declares, ministered to his necessities. There is no proof of confidence that a high-minded man can show like this of being willing to take pecuniary assistance from another. Paul would never have taken this assistance from the Philippian church if there had not been a bond of warm affection and confidence existing between him and them. These were the graces of the Philippian church.

There were certain things against which the apostle needed to warn them; and yet he did not censure them for special faults. He rather cautioned them against things to which they might possibly be exposed. There was, for example, the jealousy which might possibly arise between different church-members engaged in the same sort of work. "I beseech Euodias and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind." They were two women who perhaps had a little jealousy of one another in their Christian work. The apostle cautions them to keep in mind the common cause for which they labor, and always to work together. That

is perhaps as near an approach to censure as we find in the Epistle, and it is very gentle.

There is a little danger that Judaizing teachers may persuade them that they can trust something else than the one work and righteousness of Jesus Christ; and so the apostle gives them, in the form of his own experience, the instruction that we are not saved by any works of righteousness that we have done. Salvation is of the Lord. Paul seeks the righteousness of Christ, and to be clothed only with that. That is his only hope. He sees some in the Philippian church who are not faithful in their Christian life. There are professors of Christianity who do not show forth the power of religion. "There are some, I tell you even weeping, that are enemies to the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, who mind earthly things." There were a few such at Philippi.

It is wonderful that there were not more things in this Philippian church against which he could inveigh; but we find nothing in the shape of denunciation. All the apostle says, by way of qualification of his commendation, is rather a cautioning and warning against possible future evil, than a declaration that these evils were marked in the Philippian church.

And now as to the circumstances under which the Epistle to the Philippians was written. You remember that the apostle had now become a prisoner at Rome. I suppose that this Epistle to the Philippians was written later than the Epistle to the Ephesians. Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon seem to be bound together in a group. The Philippians seems to have been written somewhat later than those three, but during this

same Roman imprisonment. It must have been in the last year at least of that Roman imprisonment, because, in the Philippians, Paul speaks of the church in Rome as having acquired some size. The number of converts was large. That could hardly have been said at the beginning of his imprisonment. Then, again, his associates have left him. In the Philippians he is comparatively alone. In the early part of that imprisonment his associates were with him. There has been time for a number of journeys between Rome and Philippi.

Epaphroditus, during the imprisonment of the apostle at Rome, was sent to Paul with a contribution for his necessities. Epaphroditus had time to go to Rome and communicate to the apostle the gifts of the Philippian church. Epaphroditus was taken sick while he was ministering to Paul; the news of Epaphroditus' sickness had time to reach the Philippians; and Epaphroditus had time to hear again from Philippi of the care and anxiety of the church on his behalf.

Such journeys as these, together with the sickness of Epaphroditus and his recovery, the writing of the letter and the sending of it to the Philippians, must altogether have occupied a number of months at the least. One might better perhaps suppose that it was a year, or a year and a half. Since the imprisonment of the apostle in Rome lasted just two years, it must have been the middle of the second year at least before this Epistle to the Philippians was written. Then the date of the Epistle was the middle of the year 63, six months before the narrative of the Acts of the Apostles came to its end.

The object of the Epistle was, as I have intimated, not to reprove any particular things that the Philippians were guilty of, not to censure them as the apostle censures the Galatians, for example, or the Corinthians in one portion of the Epistle; not to set before them any great scheme of Christian doctrine, nor to vindicate his apostolic authority, as in the Epistle to the Romans. The object of the Epistle was apparently to pour forth the gratitude of the apostle's heart for the great kindness and love which they had shown to him in sympathizing with him in his troubles and in his imprisonment, to encourage them in enduring similar trials and sufferings, and to increase their knowledge and love and joy.

I do not know of any other Epistles in which the personal remarks are so beautifully expressed as they are here. It is the natural and spontaneous outflow of the apostle's heart. He would stimulate their Christian virtues. He would broaden and beautify their Christian character, and he would show them how all spiritual blessings are theirs in the gospel of Christ. There is no other Epistle of Paul which, in our higher moments, when we are near to Christ, seems to us so sweet and beautiful as this Epistle to the Philippians.

The order of the Epistle is determined in a large part by this desire to express the gratitude of the apostle to God. In the very first verse you have recognized an organization of the Christian church that is noteworthy. He writes to those who recognize Christ, to the saints in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons; i. e., with the overseers and the deacons. Only two orders are recognized, only two sorts of officers in the

Christian church. First the pastors, or overseers, of the flock, and then the deacons of the church; and I suppose we have here the outline of church organization in the apostolic time. We do not anywhere find that there are more than these two ranks, or officers, in the Christian church.

One of the first prayers is "that their love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment." He recognizes the depth of their Christian devotion, but he would have a discreet devotion; he would have an affection that has laws and bounds; he would have it conform to the truth. So he prays that they may add to their love Christian knowledge; and then, as the means of increasing this knowledge, he speaks of his own personal relations, and, in the latter part of the first chapter, is occupied with an account of his own experience, and of the fact that all his trials and persecutions have been the means of furthering the gospel of Christ. So he recognizes everything that has happened to him as God's choice, ordained not only for his own good, but for the good of the Christian church.

Only in the second chapter does he give us the one doctrinal portion of the Epistle. There is one doctrine set forth in this Epistle to the Philippians with a fulness and power such as we find nowhere else in the New Testament. It is the doctrine of the person of Christ, and the relation of the divine to the human nature of our Saviour. You remember how it begins. The apostle would urge them to humility, and he sets before them the example of Christ who, being in the form of God, thought not his equality with God a thing

to be forcibly retained, but emptied himself, taking upon him the form of a servant, and being made in the likeness of man. Not only did he humble himself to become man, but he further humbled himself by suffering death, even the death of the cross. "Wherefore God hath highly exalted him and given him a name above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

There is no more sublime passage in the New Testament than this. It sets forth the infinite glory of Christ, his absolute equality with God in the beginning, and then his emptying himself of this glory, in order that he might unite himself to our human nature, to sanctify and redeem it. This is the great doctrine of the Epistle to the Philippians. What a motive to humility we have! He who was rich became poor that we might be made rich. What an argument for self-denial and the giving up of our own personal interests in order that we may serve Christ and his church!

In the third and fourth chapters you have exhortations to unity; you have warnings against Judaizing tendencies; and you have the Epistle ending with warm salutations and expressions of the apostle's love. As you read this Epistle, one thing is very striking in it; and that is the love which passes all love that is common among men. There is just one explanation of it. The apostle longs after the Philippians in the heart of Jesus Christ. In our old version this was translated in such a way that the meaning of it was obscure, even

repulsive, "in the bowels of Jesus Christ." That word, you know, was in the old times simply the common word for heart. When you hear of an accident to a friend, it affects you in that very portion of your body in which he has suffered. You have an awful feeling of goneness; and the word "bowels," because it is connected with our own emotions of sympathy with the trouble and pain of others, came to be used for heart. The word meant only "heart," and it ought always to have been translated by "heart." The apostle longs for the Philippians "in the heart of Jesus Christ." As much as to say, "It is not my own affection that I am expressing. I am incapable of this myself; I could not rise to this height, in which my sympathy goes out to Christians in the remotest part of the world, and bears them on my soul continuously. This is all due to the fact that I have entered into union with Jesus Christ, and that his heart has become my heart."

My dear friends, there are certain things we can do in Christ, and by virtue of our relation to him, that we can never do without him. There is a sympathy which we can feel for the wants and needs of others, longings for their good, unselfish devotion to their interest, which is absolutely impossible to unregenerate human nature. It becomes possible only when we enter into union with Christ. Then Christ fills our hearts with some of the unselfish sympathy that pervades his heart, and we ourselves begin to feel. Whatever comes to us, we long to devote ourselves to Christ. Here is the secret of Christian generosity and unselfishness. When we become one with Christ we get out of our

narrowness, out of our pettiness; we begin to love as Christ loves, and to long for the good of his church as Christ longs for it. So this whole Epistle to the Philippians is a continuous exhortation to Christian peace, Christian faith, Christian confidence, Christian joy, and Christian love.

If Christ is only an ideal conception or only a historical person in the past, this faith, love, and joy are indeed impossible. But if Christ is a living and present Saviour, to whom we may become so united that his Spirit takes up his residence in us, and his heart becomes our heart, why, then, the highest forms of Christian life are simple and easy. All things are possible to him who opens his heart to receive the great Son of God, and who by faith joins himself to Christ; for thus our hearts become connected with the great heart of the universe and are immeasurably enlarged.

Here is the secret of the Epistle to the Philippians, and of the joy, peace, and comfort that fill the apostle's heart. When he does not know whether the coming week shall bring to him life or death, he is content. He knows that, since Christ is in him and he is in Christ, "for him to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

This Epistle to the Colossians was written probably to the smallest of the churches which Paul addressed. Colosse was not a great city, compared with Corinth or Rome or Ephesus; and yet, from this small city, there went out influences that were very important for the kingdom of God.

History relates that Antiochus the Great, that tyrant and oppressor of the Jews, brought two thousand Jewish families from Mesopotamia and Babylon and settled them in Phrygia, the southwestern part of Asia Minor. This Jewish influence was, therefore, mixed with an Oriental influence; and the strange combination which we find in the Colossian church of formalism and Oriental theosophy was perhaps determined by the fact that Judaism in this portion of the world had a historical connection with the East.

In Phrygia there were three cities of some importance. Both Laodicea and Hierapolis were apparently of more importance than Colosse. It was to Laodicea that John wrote one of his seven Epistles to the churches in Asia, which you find in the book of Revelation.

Little Colosse was situated on the banks of the river Lycus, and in the midst of magnificent mountain scenery, so that its situation seems to have prompted a loftiness of thought.

It does not appear that Paul ever made to Colosse

a personal visit. During his stay in Ephesus, at the time when he had the most wonderful success in all his apostolic ministry, we read that the word of God went out into the regions of Asia. Although he did not himself visit Colosse, it would almost seem that some residents of Colosse visited Paul; and during those two years when he was teaching in the school of Tyrannus, in Ephesus, day by day, it is not at all improbable that some of the visitors from Colosse heard Paul, became his converts, and took back the gospel to the region from which they came.

What we know of the formation of the church is exceedingly little; but there are indications that Epaphras (not, by the way, Epaphroditus, who was a member of the church of Philippi, but an entirely different person), a Colossian, had received the gospel and had become the evangelist of Colosse. This Epaphras, when Paul became a prisoner at Rome, made Paul a visit in his imprisonment and devoted himself to the apostle's care with such assiduity that he shared the apostle's sufferings and dangers. It would almost seem that he had involved himself in the apostle's imprisonment, so that the apostle calls him a "fellow prisoner." Whether he had become amenable to the law, we do not know, but the epithet Paul bestowed upon him is a peculiar one, his "fellow prisoner in Christ."

When Epaphras made his visit to Paul it is evident that he related to Paul the circumstances of the Colossian church; told him of the new teaching that had become current among them; told him of Jewish teachers who combined with their Jewish tendencies some

Oriental notions of a newer and larger wisdom than was provided for in the gospel itself, something of the nature of philosophy, something that was hidden from the mass of men, and was the possession only of the few. By ascetic practices, and by fastings and observances of an outward sort, this wisdom might be obtained. Paul, as a result of these representations on the part of Epaphras, writes this letter to the Colossian church.

We read in the Epistle to Philemon that, just about this same time, Paul had been the means of converting to Christ a runaway slave by the name of Onesimus, who had escaped from his master Philemon and had made his way to the city of Rome, where he thought perhaps there was the best chance of his being hid. After Paul had converted him to Jesus Christ, Onesimus was anxious to return to his master and make reparation for the wrong he had done him. Paul sends him back, and with him he sends that beautiful Epistle to Philemon, in which he commends Onesimus to his Christian forgiveness. Onesimus and Tychicus were the messengers who took this letter to the Colossians as well, and with this apparently the letter to the Ephesians, which is alluded to in the latter part of this letter to the Colossians, where the apostle speaks of another letter which the Colossians were to possess themselves of, while, at the same time, they were to give to the Laodiceans the letter which they themselves had received. So we may conclude that this letter to the Colossians was written either at the close of the year 62, or at the beginning of the year 63, four or five years after the Colossian church had been founded.

It is necessary, in order to understand the apostle, to get some more full idea of the errors that had begun to be prevalent in this Colossian church. They were very peculiar. They were such as we do not find alluded to in the previous letters of Paul. We do find some allusions to them in the pastoral Epistles to Timothy and Titus. The great danger of the Colossian church was the danger of lukewarmness. That is the specific fault which John rebukes in the neighboring church of Laodicea. Though Laodicea was not a great city, it was wealthy. An earthquake took place, and Tacitus, the historian, tells us that Laodicea was able to rebuild itself with its own resources, without calling in the aid of Rome; and this seems to be mentioned as proof that it was a place of considerable importance.

In the writings of John to Laodicea, he speaks of the church as fancying that it was rich and increasing in goods and had need of nothing. This apparently was also the case with the church in Colosse. Riches had corrupted the Christian heart; the deceitfulness of wealth had led to selfishness and lukewarmness in their Christian faith; and with this influence of worldly goods there was intellectual pride and self-satisfied reliance upon what mere human reason and speculation could do. There grew up a species of wisdom which was not the wisdom of Christ, not "the wisdom among those that are perfect," which the apostle speaks of in his letter to the Corinthians, but a wisdom of this world. That wisdom was exclusive; it prided itself upon being the possession of the few; it was an esoteric doctrine held by those who fancied that they had greater intellectual powers than the

majority of the Christian church. Here was the first great danger of the Colossian church; namely, intellectual pride and dependence upon human speculation, rather than upon Christ or his gospel. This tendency to intellectual speculation ran in a peculiar course, and that course seems to have been determined for it by the Oriental influence to which the Jews in that neighborhood had become subjected.

In order to explain what the doctrine was which the Colossians held, or to which they tended, I shall have to remind you of the fact that, in the East, there were large numbers of persons who thought it was absolutely necessary to separate God from the world in order to explain the existence of evil. They thought it could not be that God had himself created the world, because they saw so much in the world that was wrong. They fancied that the existence of evil was an incident of matter. Man was a sinner because he had a physical system. This was a strange perversion of the truth; it ignored the fact that the soul masters the body, and that the body is only the servant of the soul. There can be no sin properly in the body itself, for all sin has its source in the spirit. We cannot explain moral evil by attributing it simply to the body, or to matter, or to the physical world. The only possible explanation of moral wrong is in the free decision of the moral creature against God; in other words, in the spirit and not in the body.

But this strange sect of thinkers fancied that they could explain evil by calling it a mere incident of the physical system, something which had its origin in our connection with matter. So they thought to remove

God just as far as possible from the world, from the physical universe; and they did it in this way. They said that all things proceeded in the last analysis from God, but that things in the universe were successive emanations from the substance of God; God was the central sun, and that as his light proceeded farther and farther from him, it became more and more mixed with darkness; so that, when infinitely removed from God, the darkness predominated over the light, and on the outskirts of the universe evil was in the ascendency. Or, to put the doctrine in a somewhat plainer form and using the word creation, these thinkers fancied that God only created at the beginning something that was really of importance, and then that creation created something else—this creation that was at the second remove from the intercourse being less perfect than the first one was—that this second created a third, and that third created a fourth, and that fourth something still beyond; and when you got far enough away from God, the central light and truth and holiness, why, of course, you had something that was very imperfect indeed, and matter was one of these last emanations or creations. So there was an explanation of evil in the universe.

You can see at once that between man, who is evil, and God, who is holy, there were a great many intermediate creations. There were hierarchies, principalities, and powers between us and God. It could not be said that God was the immediate creator either of our souls or of our bodies; our creation was due to some angelic power. And because these angelic powers were between us and God, they were the proper and natural

objects of worship; so that the worship of angels was one of the features of this Oriental system. You can also see that, if God was so very lofty and so very high, and we were so very evil and so very low, it was almost impossible that these corrupted creatures could go at once to God. We must go through mediators—these angels, these principalities, these powers were the media between us and God, and they were to be worshiped as the means by which we might ascend by our thoughts and by our prayers to the Most High.

Another idea besides this of mediatorship between man and God was the result of this system. The body, they said, is the source of evil. If we only could get rid of the body we could be holy. Why, then, the more you can get rid of the body the more holy you will be. If we cannot slough off the body entirely, let us put just as much despite upon the body as we can. So all manner of ascetic practices, all manner of mortifications of the flesh were introduced, as if, through them, men could become holy and could commend themselves to God.

You see, then, that there were three great practices or errors. First, this intellectual exclusiveness, this spirit of caste in the Christian church; secondly, this idea of mediatorship between man and God, created beings between us and God interposing bars between us and our Maker; and then, thirdly, practical asceticism, self-mortification, putting of despite upon the body, in order that we might thereby become pure.

These great errors it was very important for the subsequent history of the Christian church that Paul

should correct. If the Roman church had only paid attention to this Epistle to the Colossians, how much monasticism and self-mortification, how much dependence upon the Virgin and the saints as mediators with God, would have been rendered forever impossible!

The remedy which Paul suggests for all this is simply Christ. Christ is the remedy for all error, because Christ is the absolute and perfect truth. The preaching of Christ and the setting forth of the glory and majesty of the Son of God sweep away these various forms of error, and there is nothing else in heaven or in earth that can sweep them away.

How is it that Paul presents Jesus Christ to these Colossians, in order to destroy, in root and branch, this dangerous heresy that had become rife among them? Simply in this way: He declares that Jesus Christ is the head of the universe; that he is the Lord of all things; that he is the Creator through whom all things were made; that he is the Sustainer, so that all things, either in the physical or spiritual universe, hold together only in him; that he is the one Revealer of God; that he is the only wisdom and only truth; and that the Colossians, if they have Christ, have all. See how this doctrine applies to each one of the errors to which I allude. The Colossians were claiming that there was a larger wisdom, which might be the possession of a few; that it was something that belonged only to the initiated; that it was something above and beyond what was presented to them in the gospel. Speculation and ascetic practices, they claimed, could put them in possession of this larger and nobler understanding of the truth. How does Paul refute this

error? By declaring to them that Jesus Christ is the wisdom and truth of God; that, if they have Jesus Christ, they have all wisdom and all truth; and that every single person who has Christ has this wisdom and this truth. No exclusiveness at all, absolute universalism of the gospel.

The twenty-eighth verse of the first chapter of the Colossians we often read without understanding the remarkable significance of every word of it. Paul speaks of "admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, in order that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." Three times, in that single verse, that phrase "every man" occurs. Admonish every man, teach every man in all wisdom, present every man perfect—here is no confining of wisdom to a few. Every member of the Christian church has a right to the most esoteric teaching that can possibly be given. All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are open to all believers. Paul teaches the perfect democracy of the church of God. You that belong to an intellectual caste are establishing a sort of secret society inside of the church. The notion has in it an infinite amount of evil. Admonish every man and teach every man in Christ the true wisdom of God, in order to present every man perfect. No one is to be contented with imperfection. All there is of perfection is open to every member of the church of Christ.

The second great error, as you remember, was that of mediatorship between man and God; angels, principalities, and powers to be reverenced, to be worshiped, and to be made successive steps by which we might

reach up to God; in other words, separation of man from God. How does Paul meet that? Why, by telling the Colossians that Jesus Christ is the one and only Mediator between man and God. Are we created by some angel or principality or power, which itself was created by something higher than it, and it created by something higher, and so on through successive sources back to God? Paul replies that there is just one Mediator between man and God, and one Creator, and that Mediator and Creator is Christ. The gulf between man and God is bridged by the one Jesus, our Lord. If we have Christ, we pass over all these mediators. They are thrust out of the way; they have never existed. Christ is the one Mediator; when we have Christ we have direct communion between God and man; and because Christ is God the Creator, God the Sustainer, and God the Revealer, when we come to Christ we come into direct relation to God. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," says Christ; and for salvation his prescription is, "Come unto me."

What a blessing it is, my brethren and friends, that instead of being shoved off at a great distance from God and taught that we are to look up to angelic agencies by which we are to reach him, we are told, in this Epistle, that every Christian has direct relations to the divine Christ, and that in Christ he can come into direct communion with God, so that there is nothing any longer to separate him from the holy of holies and from immediate communion with the Father of his spirit!

The last of the errors which I mentioned was practical asceticism and mortification of the body; "touch

not, taste not, handle not"; the idea that, by all sorts of restrictions, we are going to commend ourselves to God. That was the doctrine of the Essenes, in Palestine. There is a historical connection between the doctrine of the Essenes and the Colossians of the first century and the Gnostic heresy that sprang from it in the second century. Investigation has shown the connection between these three forms of heretical teaching.

The Essenes, in Palestine, had all these various ideas of which I have spoken. They abjured, for example, the use of flesh, of wine, and of oil; and they rejected marriage. They were inclined to sun-worship, that is, a worship of the heavenly luminary; and they refused to offer bloody sacrifices. They rejected the resurrection of the body, because the body was material. The body was a source of evil; and if they only got rid of the body at death they never wanted it back again. They therefore denied that the body was to rise, or that, in the next world, we were to have a body. These ascetic notions of the Essenes were propagated westward; we find these same notions among the Colossians, to whom Paul writes; and afterward we find these same ideas, more largely developed, in the Gnostics of the second century.

How did Paul meet this doctrine of mortification of the body as the means of perfection? Why, simply by preaching Christ again. Christ is the great Purifier; Christ in the heart is the only Sanctifier. Do you suppose that you can make yourself better by simply putting yourself through bodily mortification and ascetic practices? What you want is perfection within,

purification of the heart. That is accomplished only by Christ within the soul.

Paul mentions these outward restrictions with a sort of contemptuous tone, " touch not, taste not, handle not," as much as to say that they are of no value whatever, that mere asceticism and will-worship can never purify the flesh. He then turns to the Colossians and says: " If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God," " for ye died and your life is hid with Christ in God." He urges them to put away all manner of evil, because they have Christ in them, and Christ is the very life of their souls.

If there is a sensible doctrine in the world, that is a sensible doctrine, as opposed to the absurd notion that man can somehow make himself better by external mortifications and ablutions and restrictions. So we have Christ, the explanation of all the problems, and the remedy for all the errors of the Colossian church. The remedy for all this intellectual exclusiveness is in Christ, the wisdom of God. The remedy for all this notion of mediators, or agencies, between man and God is the idea of Christ, the one Mediator. The remedy for all this foolish notion of physical mortifications and self-denials is the living Christ within, the only Purifier and Sanctifier of the human spirit.

What a magnificent doctrine this is that Paul preaches to us in the Epistle to the Colossians! In treating it I have followed the order of the apostle. First of all, Paul sets forth the dignity and glory of Christ; then he states that, since we have such a Christ, we ought to beware of being led astray by philosophy

and vain deceit, after the rudiments of the world and not after Christ; and in the concluding chapter, since we have this Christ and all these glorious privileges, he urges us to walk worthily of the gospel which we have received.

In the Epistle to the Colossians we have a yet more general truth intimated to us, namely, the relation between philosophy and religion. There are many men who excuse their unbelief and disobedience with the idea that they have a better philosophy than that which Christianity can furnish. I would like to have you notice the word which Paul uses when he speaks of such philosophy as that. He bids us beware of being led astray by "vain deceit, after the rudiments of this world." Rudiments? What are rudiments? Why, rudiments are nothing but the A, B, C. Just as much as to say: Why, you people, who think you have so much philosophy, have only learned the first letters of the alphabet. You really do not know what philosophy is. The trouble with you is that you keep yourselves in the primary class, when you ought to have a knowledge, not only of the whole alphabet, but of everything that the whole alphabet can spell. Do not content yourself with the rudiments of the world! Do not content yourself with things that can be perceived only with the intellectual eye, while you neglect the things perceived only with the heart. You cannot trust your native reason, your mere intellect, unenlightened by the Spirit of God and unconditioned by a right state of the affections. No man, with the corrupt and perverse nature which he has received from his ancestry, can trust in himself, unaided. He is

dependent upon the Spirit of God and upon divine illumination.

A young man, sick with the typhoid fever, was in that peculiar state where some of his perceptions were normal and some abnormal. He was partly rational, and partly irrational. In his state of weakness, life itself depended upon his taking nourishment. His mother came to him and said, "My son, drink this milk." He looked at it a moment and said, "It is black!" The mother replied: "Oh, no, my son, it is not black, this is milk. Drink it, the doctor says you must take it." He looked at it again and said, "No, it is black!" He would not take the milk. He died. Now a perverse heart, a depraved nature, can just as little trust some of its perceptions and notions with regard to God and divine things as that young man could trust the sight of his eyes. Suppose he had said to his mother: "Why, mother, have I not eyes? has not God given me eyes to see with? is there anything more certain than the sight of my eyes? The sight of my eyes declares that it is black." That young man was very foolish. He should have taken into consideration that he was in a state of fever and that, in his deplorable physical condition, his eyes might deceive him. In religion I would a great deal rather trust the word of God than trust perceptions of my perverse spiritual nature; and, if I have notions or beliefs which contradict the word of God, it becomes me to submit my beliefs to the declarations of Christ. That is better wisdom than the fevered philosophy of a man who is in this depraved moral state. So with regard to the relation between philosophy and Christianity. Philosophy has

only a rudimentary knowledge of the truth. Christianity has the whole truth, because it is the whole wisdom of God as it is revealed in Jesus Christ.

Paul does not, in the Epistle to the Colossians, speak of any overt acts of immorality on the part of the teachers of false doctrine. But we ought to remember that, in the second century, when these germs had developed and borne fruit, the Gnostics were honeycombed with immorality, and their immorality was of the most degrading description. If teachers of unbelief do not, at present, show the dreadful fruits of false teaching in their own private lives, those fruits will certainly be shown in time, at least in their disciples. It is only the tree of correct Christian doctrine that bears, in the long run, the fruit of true morality.

Let us be very careful, therefore, to hold the truth of Christ as it is revealed in his word. There is no safety but in accepting Christ as not only the way and the life, but also the truth. This Epistle to the Colossians presents to us Christ as the head of all things to the universe, just as the Epistle to the Ephesians presented to us Christ as the head over all things to the church.

THE EPISTLES TO THE THESSALONIANS

In the very earliest times there was a place called Therma, at the northwestern corner of the Ægean Sea. It was so called because there were warm springs there; and that place Therma gave its name to the Thermaic Gulf, the northwestern projection, so to speak, of the Greek Archipelago. That place was beautifully situated and had great advantages for commerce. The result was that, in the year 315 before Christ, Cassander rebuilt it and gave it a new name from the name of his wife, who was the sister of Alexander the Great; and the name he gave to the place was Thessalonica.

This Thessalonica became afterward one of the great cities of the Via Egnatia, the great Roman military road between the East and the West, and a place of great political importance.

In the time of the apostle it was the capital of Macedonia; it was governed by a Roman prefect, although under him the old laws were respected, and according to those old laws there were seven politarchs, so called, or magistrates, elected by the people. It is a very curious fact that this word "politarchs" is used in the Acts of the Apostles in describing the founding of the church at Thessalonica. The word precisely answers to what has recently been found to be the actual government of the city. The word, moreover, is found in inscriptions upon the site of the old city of

Thessalonica; and a ruined arch not only has this word "politarch" on it, but has also some names which bear a very strong resemblance to those we find in the Acts and in the Epistles. So we have evidence that the accounts of the founding of the church in the Acts and in the Epistles, which were written by Paul, are all genuine. They exactly fit in with what we know from other sources to be the surroundings and government of the place.

Thessalonica was a center from which Christianity might be very easily diffused, for it was upon the great highway from the East to the West. All the travel from East to West passed through it. And, as it was a seaport of great importance, it shared with Corinth and with Ephesus the commerce of the Ægean Sea. We are quite prepared to hear Paul say to us that from Thessalonica the gospel had sounded out through Macedonia and all Achaia.

The modern town is called Salonica, a corruption or shortening of the ancient word. Even now it is the second city in European Turkey. It has a population of ninety thousand, a curious population in its constitution, for one-third of them are Spanish Jews who came thither when they were expelled from Spain; one-third are Greeks; and another third are Turks.

Very curiously too, one of the commonest trades in Salonica to-day is the weaving of goat's-hair, so that travelers say that the sound which most frequently strikes one's ear as he passes through the streets, is the click of the shuttle. And we read, in the founding of the church, that Paul worked here with his own hand; worked undoubtedly at his trade of weaving

goat's-hair, or making tents of goat's-hair; worked before the break of day in order to save his time for preaching, and yet support himself in his labors for the gospel.

You remember that, after Paul had preached the gospel in Philippi and had passed through stripes and imprisonment, he was compelled to leave the town, and to leave it suddenly. With his back still raw and bleeding from the scourge, he made his way through Apollonia and Amphipolis until he came to Thessalonica. As there is no mention of his staying any length of time in these intermediate places, it seems to be altogether probable that, without delay, he proceeded to Thessalonica, and began to preach the gospel there—a remarkable instance of courage and devotion in the prosecution of his work. Persecution in one place only drives him to another; and, no sooner has he reached that other, than he immediately begins to proclaim the same truth that had brought him into difficulty before. The teacher is as indomitable as the truth is unchangeable.

During his stay in Thessalonica he was dependent upon his own labor for his support. People there do not appear to have been wealthy. He would not lay upon those who were won for the gospel the burden of supporting him. During that short stay—perhaps not more than a month—he twice received contributions from the Philippian brethren whom he had so recently left. So by his own personal labor, before the break of day or possibly by night work, after he had been preaching the gospel in public and from house to house all the day, Paul gained the means of his own

support in carrying on his work in the gospel. For three Sabbath days he preached the gospel in the synagogue.

In Philippi there was no synagogue; but in Thessalonica, apparently, there was a large number of Jews, and probably a synagogue where they met together. Some Jews, it is said, believed, and of the chief women not a few; and a multitude of proselytes were converted—heathen adherents of the synagogue, or Gentiles who had accepted more or less perfectly the Jewish faith, but had not actually become Jews. The result seems to have been the formation of a church that was mainly composed of Gentile converts. We do not find in Paul's letters to the church any evidences of necessity on his part to deal with questions of law and circumcision, such as we find him dealing with when he writes to other churches that were Jewish in their constitution.

He preached the gospel here for about four weeks, and gathered to himself so large a number of these proselytes that he aroused the wrath of the unbelieving Jews. They stirred up a riot against him. They assembled a great number of unbelievers in the marketplace; and, with this following, made an assault upon the house of Jason, Paul's host. In the Epistle to the Romans, Jason is called a kinsman of Paul. Some have supposed that this means a kinsman spiritually; yet it seems most natural to take the word in its literal acceptation. When the Jews made their assault upon the house of Jason, Paul and Silas and Timothy were not there. They were perhaps preaching elsewhere, although still somewhere in the town. The Jews could

only take Jason, Paul's host, and bring him before the magistrates, the politarchs of the city.

They made the charge that Paul and Silas and Timothy were attempting to establish another sovereignty, by preaching in the name of one Jesus, a king. The intimation was that they were subverting the constituted authority and were guilty of high treason. The magistrates were desirous of maintaining their good relations with Rome. If they allowed such preaching as this to go on they would be compromised; and, as they were unable at the time to take bail of Paul and Silas, they seem to have taken bail of Jason, that no harm should be suffered and that this work should not continue. The result was that Paul and Silas and Timothy, that very night, took their departure from Thessalonica, and presently made their way southward to Athens, and finally to Corinth, to which Paul came toward the close of the year A. D. 50.

The persecution which had failed to harm the apostles themselves broke upon the devoted heads of the new church-members at Thessalonica. It would seem that they were maltreated after the departure of Silas and Paul, and that their circumstances of persecution and trial called especially for the sympathy of the apostle. This doubtless was one of the reasons why the first letter to the Thessalonians was written. Paul naturally was concerned about the spiritual and the temporal welfare of these new converts. Twice he proposed to make them a visit, but in one way or another he was prevented. At last he sent Timothy to inquire with regard to their state, and when Timothy came back to him with a favorable report, declaring

that they were still steadfast in their faith, and were still witnessing for Christ in spite of persecutions, and in spite of many sorrows which had recently come to them in the deaths of some they greatly loved, Paul's heart overflowed with gratitude, and as, at another time, he wrote to the Corinthians his second Epistle full of love and thanksgiving to God, so he was moved to write this first letter to the Thessalonians, which expresses his ardent affection, and encourages them to endure persecution. Paul aims also to instruct them further in the Christian life, and to build them up in faith and holiness. As we read this first Epistle, especially the first three chapters of it, we perceive that here is a church that is living in the first freshness of its love to Christ. It is a beautiful picture of overflowing faith and zeal and affection. The apostle recognized it as a church in which the power of God had been made manifest. As they had gladly received the word, so they had been faithful to the word which they had received.

Yet, at the same time, there were certain things that needed to be corrected, and which required admonition. The members of the church were mostly Greeks, and they showed the defects of the Greek character. They were impulsive and excitable, and there was a tendency to indolence among them. Some were prone to avarice, and there was danger in sensual directions. All these things Paul recognizes; and while he commends them for their love and patience and faithfulness to Christ, he warns them against these wrong tendencies, and strives to set them right. And yet, after all, the great danger of the Thessalonians has not yet

been mentioned. Their main defects, and the main difficulties toward which Paul addresses himself in the latter part of the First Epistle, center about the doctrine of the coming of Christ. If we can only understand what Paul's preaching had been, and how they had received that preaching, I think we shall have the proper point of view from which to estimate these two Epistles to the Thessalonians.

At this time in the apostle's life he had not advanced, so far as we can see, to the teaching of those larger and profounder doctrines of the Christian faith which he sets forth so magnificently in the Romans and in the Ephesians and in the Colossians. It was a sort of elementary teaching that he gave to the Thessalonians, perhaps because of the fact that they were new converts from among the heathen, and that one thing, above all, needed to be impressed upon them, namely, the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The preaching of Paul to the Thessalonians, if we may judge from his Epistles, was such preaching as we find represented in his speeches in the Acts of the Apostles.

Addressing heathen, as he did, he reproves their sins, declares their need of pardon, and stimulates them to repentance by declaring the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ as a Judge. When he has thus spoken of Christ as the Lord, and of Christ's coming to judge the world, the Thessalonians are led to accept the gospel, to believe in this Christ as a Saviour, and actually to enter the Christian church.

Four weeks with these heathen converts was not a long time to expound the mysteries of the gospel of Christ. It would seem that the teaching given them

was somewhat elementary. The doctrine of the coming of Christ was not fully understood by some of the Thessalonians.

After Paul had departed, they were led to think that the coming of Christ was not to be long delayed; that it was certainly to take place in the lifetime of those who were then members of the church. Since some whom they especially loved had died already, they drew the inference that these departed friends, by dying before Christ's coming, had lost their share in the Messianic glory; in other words, that those who had been so early and prematurely taken away were debarred from participation in the Saviour's triumph; and they grieved that their departed friends had lost so much.

In the First Epistle to the Thessalonians, Paul corrects this error first of all, and tells them that, when Christ comes, those who sleep in Jesus will be the first that are raised from the dead; that they will be caught up in the air; and that then those who are living will be caught up with them, to meet the Lord in the clouds. Paul corrects their wrong impression with regard to the meaning of his words. He declares that the resurrection of the dead is one event; that all are to be raised together; that all are to be raised at the coming of Christ; and that the rising of those who have departed in the faith of Jesus will precede in time the rising of those who are still living at his coming. Since some were disposed to regard this coming as immediate, Paul urges them to be faithful in their appointed calling; quietly to earn their own livelihood from day to day; to be prepared for whatever may

come; to be prepared whenever Christ comes, by being prepared always. And there the First Epistle to the Thessalonians leaves the matter.

There was a class of New Testament prophets who, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, interpreted the Scriptures. Some of these prophets had declared the real truth with regard to this matter of Christ's coming and had pointed out their mistake to those who were thus agitated and excited. Those who were thus agitated had been inclined to neglect the admonitions that had been given to them. Paul, therefore, advises the Thessalonians not to despise the prophets, but to heed the instruction which they gave under the influence of the Spirit. With these particular injunctions, and with a few others directed to more minute matters of Christian practical life, the First Epistle closes.

Both the Epistles to the Thessalonians must be dated in the year A. D. 51. During the interval that elapsed between the First and Second Epistles—an interval not very long in point of time, probably not more than six months at the most—it would seem as if these tendencies in the Thessalonian church increased, until at last the agitation become very general, and the misinterpretation of Paul's views became much more serious than at the first.

People who are not accustomed to think very deeply can take any sort of document, can run away with a single phrase and exaggerate its meaning, while at the same time they neglect the qualifying words that have been used, and so fail to get the whole scope of the document. In this way the First Epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians was misinterpreted. While Paul

speaks of what will happen at the coming of Christ, and declares that all should be ready for his coming, the inference was unwarrantably drawn that Christ's coming was in the immediate future, and that, therefore, the main thing to do was to watch for the coming of the Lord and pay little attention to ordinary temporal affairs. Paul was credited with teaching that in the lifetime of those then living Christ would come in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. It was necessary that Paul should correct this misapprehension of his teaching. His second letter was written to set everything right by declaring that they had misunderstood what he had said to them.

When you compare these two letters of the apostle, four things are perfectly plain with regard to them. The first is, that the two letters agree perfectly with one another. The doctrine of the one is perfectly consistent with the doctrine of the other. They are two hemispheres which complement one another. The second is, that there is not, in either of these Epistles, any statement that our Lord would come during the lifetime of those who were then members of the church. In the Second Epistle, Paul makes it perfectly plain that this is not to be so, by the fact that he prophesies great intervening events, and declares that these must take place before the Lord can come. "The man of sin" must be revealed. There is a power which now withholds his full manifestation, and that withholding power must be taken away first. In other words, it is intimated that the end is farther away than these Thessalonians are inclined to believe. These great intervening events, then, are set forth as the third piece

of instruction which the apostle gives to them. And then, fourthly, it is perfectly plain, upon reading these Epistles together, that the apostle never did teach expressly, and never did teach at all, that Christ was to come in the lifetime of Paul himself.

It is quite possible that the apostle Paul had his own private surmises with regard to the meaning of his prophetic utterances. But it is very important that we should distinguish between inspiration and inferences from inspiration. It is very important that we should distinguish between what the Spirit definitely communicates with regard to the future, and the private impressions which even an apostle may have with regard to the meaning of those things that are communicated. Peter, in his Epistle, declares that those who were inspired in the Old Testament times "sought what time or what manner of time the Spirit within them did signify, when they spoke beforehand of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow." In other words, even inspired men in Old Testament times, when they had communicated great things with regard to the future, looked upon this revelation with wonder, and did not comprehend its meaning. A man may have given to him great revelations with regard to the future, which, yet, he may not be able to understand. Just as under the Old Testament, the prophets had made known to them things with regard to the coming of Christ, and yet what time it was, or what manner of time it was, in which these things were to take place, they did not understand; just so Paul seems to have had made known to him the fact of the second coming of Christ, the resurrection, and the judgment,

and yet Paul was not told when these things were to take place. He was left to himself with regard to that matter, and knew but little more as to the time of Christ's coming than did these church-members whom he addressed. Indeed, in the early part of Paul's life and ministry, and even while he was preaching to the Thessalonians and writing to them, Paul may have had a private surmise and hope that this revelation might refer to a time very near at hand in the future, and might have hoped that Christ's coming might be in his own day. But if he had such a private surmise as that, he never once taught it. There is not one word, in the Acts or in any one of his Epistles, which shows that Paul ever vouched for the immediate coming of Christ. On the other hand, it is plain that, as the apostle's life went on, his private impressions with regard to the meaning of Christ's revelation of the future changed their character; when he writes to Timothy, the last of the Epistles which we know to have proceeded from him—Second Timothy—he says: "Now I am ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand; I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." In other words, he expects death, after the ordinary manner, and perhaps by martyrdom. He does not expect that the Lord will come before he dies. He has got past any such impression as that. Either he has had new communications from God with regard to the time, so that now he understands that it is not in the immediate future, or he has used his ordinary faculties of human discernment to such effect that he sees the time to be farther away than he supposed in his early experience.

But, I would have you remember, he has never taught anything about it; and whatever false impressions have been formed by the Thessalonians in regard to this matter have been their own impressions, and not the necessary or proper result of any apostolic assertion.

In the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, therefore, Paul corrects the misapprehension that the Thessalonians had received with regard to his first communication; shows them that there must be great intervening events first; and urges them to put away habits of indolence and neglect of business, and to give up looking to the richer members of the church for their support, on the plea that the Lord is coming so soon that there is no use of labor or anxiety with regard to the future. He teaches that every man must work in order that he may eat, and may have something besides with which to help those who are less comfortably off than he. It is true that the doctrine of the New Testament, and the prophecy of the New Testament, and the church polity of the New Testament had a progressive development; but it is important that we understand what this progressive development was. This progressive development was simply an unfolding. Prophecy in the New Testament, as in the Old Testament, is gradually unfolded. We have prophecy in germ at the gates of Eden, when it is predicted that the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head. As age after age goes by, that initial prophecy is qualified and expanded. Just so, in the New Testament revelation, we have the beginnings of prophecy in the discourse of our Lord Jesus with regard to the destruction of Jerusalem, and we have the

unfolding of this revelation until at last we get the sum and ending of it in the Apocalypse, so that the revelation goes on until the very last apostolic writer has passed from earth.

So it is with regard to doctrine. We cannot get all the doctrine of the New Testament from this Epistle to the Thessalonians—the first Epistle that Paul wrote, as early as the year 53. We must take all the other Epistles that Paul wrote, down to the year 65 or 68, in order to get the whole doctrine of the apostle Paul, and even his Epistles must be supplemented by those of Peter, James, and John, if we would learn the complete doctrinal development of the New Testament.

Just so it is with regard to church polity. We have the beginnings in the early Epistles. If you follow the Epistles in the order of time, you find one thing after another taught as you go on, until you get to the last Epistle, when you have a pretty fully developed outline of the organization and offices and ordinances of the Christian church. This is God's method. The whole body of instruction with regard to prophecy, with regard to doctrine, and with regard to church polity was not given as a sort of lightning flash at the first; there was development in it; and yet that development reached its climax and culmination; all that was necessary to Christian faith and practice was given and was completed by the close of the apostolic age; and all development since then is simply development in the comprehension and understanding of the prophecy, doctrine, and polity then given.

It is important to observe a second thing, namely, that this development in prophecy and doctrine and

church polity, from stage to stage, was occasioned by actual outward and inward needs. In other words, Christ did not make communications to the apostles without reference to the facts in the particular case, and the needs of the church which they were instructing; but the revelation in each case was, step by step, drawn forth by the outward necessities of the churches to which the apostle wrote, and then by the inward experiences of the apostles themselves. Side by side with this development in prophecy and doctrine and church polity, we have the external needs of the churches. In the church at Jerusalem, for example, there was too much for the apostles to do. They could not serve tables, at the same time that they preached the gospel and prayed, as they ought. That particular necessity led to the appointment of deacons; the outward need led to that development of church organization.

I find another example in the Epistle to the Colossians. Here was a great heresy brewing that finally culminated in the Gnostics of the second century; that false teaching in the Colossian church was made by the Holy Spirit the occasion of giving a magnificent exposition of the greatness of Christ and of showing that he is Head over all things to this universe, the Creator and Upholder of all. The outward need of the Colossians was the occasion of unfolding this great doctrine of the Christian faith.

So we have two parallel lines. On the one hand, we have an advancing line of prophecy and doctrine and church polity; and then, on the other hand, we have a line of inward and outward experience, both on the part of the church and on the part of the apostle.

There was in those times, just as there is in these later times, a principle of false religion which had to have its development. It seems to have been God's plan that, side by side with the church, there should be the opportunity to misrepresent truth and to show the error and tendency of evil. In the New Testament, side by side with the doctrine of faith and of grace, there is a continuous development of the principle of self-righteousness and dependence upon works. "The man of sin" must be revealed. I suppose "the man of sin" is essentially the same in all ages and times. The man of sin is not simply and only Roman Catholicism. It is not simply and only the doctrine of justification by works. It is all that tendency of the human heart to self-righteousness and pride, in matters of belief and in matters of practice, which stands over against the doctrine of the grace of God, as its bitter and perpetual antagonist.

That principle of false religion began its development then; but it was hindered for a time, hindered by the outward and constant power of Roman government and organization. It reached its culmination, it had its greatest power of evil only when Roman law and organization was followed by hierarchy. The Epistle to the Thessalonians gives us the first of the prophecies of this mighty power of the world that is to rise as Antichrist and to oppose the kingdom of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Over against this prophecy of the coming opposition to the kingdom of God there stands another prophecy that must give us comfort, just as it gave the Thessalonians comfort then; and that is the prophecy of the coming of our Lord in judgment,

to put down evil and to set up righteousness in the earth. Our Lord is to come. Paul, in the early part of his life, did not know when that coming would be, and thought perhaps that it might take place in his own day. But he never made this a matter of teaching to the churches, and before his death the false impression was dispelled. He came to see that the time of Christ's coming was farther on. Age after age has come since then, and age after age has been watching and waiting for the coming of the Lord. We are to watch, as those to whom the Master may come at any time; and we are to be always ready. Somewhere in the future, we know not when, and we know not where, Christ is to come in clouds of heaven, in power and great glory, to judge the world; and, for us Christians to-day, just as it was in the times when these Epistles to the Thessalonians were written, the coming of Christ is the great comfort and hope of the church. Our Lord has gone into a far country to receive a kingdom and to return; we have been entrusted with our several talents; we are to employ and increase them until he comes. When he comes, he will bring us before him to render up our account. Let us be faithful to him, looking for and hastening, says the apostle, the coming of the day of God. By our faithfulness, by our zeal, by our Christian labor and endeavors, we may make it possible for the Lord to come the sooner and to complete his work in the earth. In the last chapter of the book of Revelation we have the words, "Behold, I come quickly"; and the answer of the church to-day, just as it was the answer of the church then, is "Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

THE EPISTLES TO TIMOTHY AND TITUS

The two Epistles to Timothy and the Epistle to Titus are called the Pastoral Epistles, because they were written by Paul to Timothy and to Titus, not as friends simply, nor as individual Christians simply, but as pastors of the church of God. They were written for the purpose of instructing these ministers in the proper methods of pastoral work.

The three Epistles have a common character. The subjects of all are very much the same. They were written in the years 64 and 65, after Paul's release from his first Roman imprisonment, and not long before his martyrdom. As the Epistles to the Thessalonians were the first that Paul wrote, so these Pastoral Epistles were the last of his writing. They are written under the shadow of approaching death. They are written by "Paul, the aged"; by one not more than sixty years of age, yet old before his time because of the shipwrecks and the scourgings he has suffered for Christ. As he nears his end, he writes with pathetic earnestness, and in a style somewhat different from that of his earlier writings; and these things give to the Pastoral Epistles a peculiar interest. Let me say a word or two, first of all, with regard to the persons to whom they were addressed: Timothy, on the one hand; Titus, on the other.

Timothy was a native of Lystra, in Asia Minor, a city where there was no Jewish synagogue. A place

that had no Jewish synagogue was a place where there were very few Jews; for, so soon as there were ten heads of families who were Jews, it was the custom to establish a synagogue. We conclude that in Lystra the number of those who professed faith in the true God must have been very small.

At Lystra, Paul, in his first missionary journey, preached to the people, and some were converted to Christ. It is not until the second missionary journey, some six years later, that we read of Timothy. Timothy was the son of a Jewish mother and of a Greek father. His Greek father must have been living, one would think, at the time when Timothy came under the influence of Paul; for, at that time, he was still uncircumcised. Timothy had been instructed in the Scriptures by his mother and by his grandmother; and that early knowledge of the Scriptures seems to have drawn Paul to him, and to have qualified Timothy for his work of preaching the gospel. It was certainly much to the credit of Timothy's mother and grandmother that, in a town where there were no privileges of public worship, he should have been so faithfully instructed in the Scriptures of the Old Testament. There was something in his mixed descent which qualified Timothy for the work to which the apostle Paul called him. Being partly Jew and partly Gentile, he had a peculiar fitness for the work of preaching the gospel in a community composed partly of Jews and partly of Gentiles.

After six years Paul came back to Lystra, and found Timothy well known and highly esteemed in the church; found, moreover, that Timothy had natural gifts, in addition to his training in the Scriptures,

which qualified him to be Paul's companion. Timothy seems to have been a young man of extreme and almost effeminate sensitiveness of organization. This made him sympathetic, and gave him access to many classes of persons. His sensitive and conscientious nature tended toward a sort of asceticism, against which Paul warns him. And yet there were many qualities that drew him to Paul; and he enjoyed, during the seventeen years in which he was Paul's companion, the constant instruction and affection of the apostle.

Titus was a person of very different mental make-up from Timothy. He was a man of sterner stuff. Strange to say, Titus is not mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles. It is only in Paul's Epistles that we learn anything about him. But the various allusions to Titus, and the various missions upon which he was sent, seem to indicate that he was a person of stalwart mind and character. Titus was probably a native of Antioch. It is from Antioch that he goes to Jerusalem, with Paul and Barnabas. Perhaps he goes as a representative of the Gentile Christians; and in that Apostolic Council, to which he was a delegate, he secures the liberty of the Gentiles. They are not to be put under the restrictions of circumcision. Throughout his whole life, Titus is a living protest against the doctrine that men, in order to become Christians, must first become Jews.

The second time when we meet with Titus is in connection with the letter which the apostle Paul writes to the church at Corinth, commanding them to excommunicate the incestuous person. Titus' second mission seems to have had for its object to insure the

obedience of the Corinthian church to the directions of Paul—a mission which could hardly have been entrusted to any but a man of great discretion and decision.

Again, we find that Titus is left behind in the Island of Crete, to complete the apostle's work and to organize the churches, after Paul and he had preached the gospel there. When we remember what the Cretans were, it is very easy to see that this was a task of no small difficulty, and one which needed something more than a person of kind disposition and gentle conduct.

Last of all, Titus goes to Dalmatia. Tradition says that Titus was the apostle of Dalmatia. Dalmatia was by no means a civilized region at that time; this seems like a mission to outside barbarians; it required not only zeal, but organizing ability.

These are all the intimations we have with regard to Titus, and the work that Titus did, although we have occasional allusions to him in Paul's Epistles, the meaning of which I think we shall see a little farther on, when we consider the large amount of instruction which this Epistle contains.

Here, then, were two persons of very different training and influence. On the one hand, a person of kindly sympathy, of almost feminine mind and character; and, on the other hand, a man of strong will and vigorous intellect. Yet both have their gifts of leadership, and we can see that they are wisely chosen as the two persons to whom Paul addresses his Pastoral Epistles. It is as if he selected two of the most opposite types of character, in order that in them he might find the

representatives of the whole ministry of Christ that was to arise and preach and work to the end of time.

The dates of these Epistles to Timothy and Titus are difficult to determine with exactness. I can justify the dates which I have assigned—during the years 64 and 65—only by telling something of Paul's story.

For many years it was thought that we must fix the date of these Epistles some time before the close of Paul's imprisonment as it is narrated in the Acts; but there are very great difficulties connected with this method of explaining their authorship. There seems to be no place in Paul's history, up to the time of the close of that imprisonment, where we can put the Epistles to Timothy and Titus.

The First Epistle to Timothy, for example, seems to be written while Timothy remains in Ephesus during a journey of Paul into Macedonia. But there is no one of the journeys of Paul narrated in the Acts which the authorship of these Epistles will fit; for, in one of these journeys, Paul took Timothy with him, and there are insuperable difficulties connected with the other journeys. Our conclusion must be that these Epistles to Timothy and Titus were not written during the period that preceded the end of Paul's first imprisonment at Rome, but must have been written after the close of that imprisonment.

We have no information with regard to the close of that imprisonment, unless we get it from these Epistles themselves. It would appear that Paul was successful in his first appeal to Cæsar; that, at the close of the stay in Rome, which is narrated in the Acts of the Apostles, he was released; and that, after his

release, he executed a purpose which he had intimated a long time before, in his Epistle to the Romans, to go into Spain and preach the gospel there. In the year 61 this first imprisonment of Paul's probably ended; and we may most reasonably conclude that the two following years, the year 62 and the year 63, were spent at what Clement, the church Father, calls the ends of the earth, or in Spain; that Paul preached the gospel there in comparative seclusion, since we have no Epistle dated from that time of the apostle's life. After his imprisonment it was possibly the most salutary thing for him to remain in comparative quiet, far away from Rome and from the notice of the Roman authorities. After those two years in Spain we may believe that the apostle went with Titus to Crete, and there, for a year perhaps, engaged in missionary work, founding and instructing churches; that from Crete he took his departure with Timothy, leaving Titus upon the ground to finish the work he had done; and that he then accomplished what had been his purpose for a long time (as we find by his early Epistles), visited the church at Colosse, left Trophimus sick at Miletus, stayed for some time in Ephesus with Timothy, left him behind to be his representative, and went northward through Troas to Philippi, having promised the Philippian church to visit them. From Philippi, three years perhaps after his first imprisonment at Rome terminated, Paul wrote the First Epistle to Timothy, while Timothy was pastor of the church at Ephesus. Leaving Philippi, he goes southward to Corinth, and at Corinth he leaves Erastus. Then he goes into Macedonia to Nicopolis; and from Nicopolis

he writes the Epistle to Titus, who is still in Crete, giving directions in regard to the conduct of his pastoral work there, and the organization of the Cretan churches.

At Nicopolis, according to tradition, Paul was again arrested upon the charge that he was the leader of the Christians throughout the world. The attitude of the Roman authorities toward the Christian faith had become more rigorous. Paul was taken to Rome, and at Rome he suffered, not the very tolerable confinement which characterized his first captivity, but a much more painful imprisonment.

In his first appearance before Cæsar he appears to have been successful, although no one stayed by him. It required courage as well as Christian principle to stand by the apostle, when standing by him might involve a sharing in his martyrdom. In his second letter to Timothy he says that only Luke was left with him. The friends that were about him in his first captivity were absent now.

The Second Epistle to Timothy, written during this second Roman imprisonment, has an entirely different air from the First Epistle, which was written to Timothy from Philippi, and from the Epistle to the Philippians, in which he anticipates release. He seems now to anticipate a speedy departure from the world; and in that Roman prison, in a very pathetic and it seems to me a very affecting way, he writes to Timothy, as he had previously written to Titus at Nicopolis, to bring to him certain things he was in need of. The cold of the prison demanded a greater amount of clothing than he had, "Bring the cloak I left at Troas."

He also had need of the books, and especially the parchments, Old Testament Scriptures, or possibly blank parchments upon which he might write something still to the churches he was soon to leave behind, and for whose welfare he was solicitous.

Here are evidences that the apostle was brought to a state of real need, and that little text about bringing the cloak, which has seemed to some so trivial as almost to constitute an objection to the inspiration of the writing, seems to me to have in it a great deal of suggestion. It is worthy to be a text of a whole sermon. It indicates that the apostle Paul was brought into great straits; and in the urgent request that Timothy will come to him quickly, we seem to see the impression that the end was drawing near. He wished to give Timothy his last instructions and to send his dying wishes to the churches.

And so the Second Epistle to Timothy, the last Epistle we have from the hand of the apostle, was written from a Roman dungeon; and only a little after, a file of Roman soldiers marched out with Paul upon the Ostian way, dug there a grave, severed his head from his body, and buried him on the spot.

The object of these Epistles, as I remarked at the beginning, is common to them all. Since the mission of the churches is the same, and the needs of the churches the same, Paul writes in very much the same strain to them all.

Two things the churches were especially in danger of, and Paul did all he could do to counteract these dangers. First, there was the danger arising from false doctrine. Paul had been absent from these

churches for several years; he had not been able to give them continuous instruction; he had been compelled to commit his work to others. During that time, Judaizing teachers had crept in; they were propounding their endless genealogies; and the germs which afterward developed into Gnosticism were all felt in each one of these churches of Christ.

In the book of Revelation the Epistle to the angel of the church at Ephesus describes the same errors and dangers against which Paul warns Timothy. The apostle John, only a little later, finds full grown the errors and dangers which previously caused sorrow to the apostle Paul. Timothy was pastor at Ephesus, and Paul addressed him. There were Hymenæus and Philetus who concerning the truth had erred, saying that the resurrection was past already. They spiritualized the resurrection, declaring that at death the soul enters at once into its loftier state; that that loftier state is ethereal; and that the body does not rise at all. These errors the apostle had first of all to meet, not, as in the Epistles written during his first captivity at Rome to the Colossians and Ephesians and Philippians, by an elaborate expounding of any single Christian doctrine, but as an old and tired man would meet them, by referring once more to the first principles of the gospel of Christ.

It is as much as to say that all we need to counteract this heresy is to return to Jesus, the Saviour, and to learn once more the A, B, C of the Christian faith. It is the old man who, in a more broken way than in his first Epistles, with nothing like the sustained eloquence which we find in the Epistles to the Ephesians and the

Colossians, gives his final instructions to those who have under their care the church of Christ.

There was a second difficulty among these churches to which the apostle was writing, through their representatives, and that was a difficulty with regard to church organization. Now church organization was a matter of development. There was not so much church organization at the beginning as there was in later days. That was ordained by God. One thing after another was provided as the need of it arose. Before we get to the end of the apostle's teaching we find a complete outline of church organization; and in these Epistles we find more in regard to church offices and church government than we find anywhere else. Here are depicted the qualifications for the Christian ministry. We have here the qualifications for the deaconship. We have directions with regard to discipline of those who are heretics and of those who are sensual. These instructions which Paul sent to his representatives in the ministry have been of great importance in the determination of church polity, during all these later times.

The style of these Epistles is different in some respects from the style of Paul's earlier writings. It has been a puzzle, to those who have examined the Epistles from a literary point of view, to know how the same person could have written, for example, both the Epistles to the Thessalonians and the Epistles to Timothy and Titus. But you are familiar with the fact that a man's style changes as he advances in years. When George William Curtis wrote his Potiphar papers, many years ago, there was a lingering

sweetness long drawn out, of which Curtis afterward became incapable. If one should read the Potiphar papers now, and should mark the infinite delicacy and the excess of sentiment which characterizes them, he would think it almost impossible that the same man could have written the calm and statesmanlike articles of "Harper's Weekly." And yet it is the same man. And so Paul, from the early part of his life to the latter part of his life, must have undergone a very great change in this matter of style. He had had experience of the world, he had mingled with all sorts of men, he had passed through all sorts of suffering; and now, toward the close of his life, there is a terseness and incisiveness in his writing, and an advanced and enlarged Christian experience, such as we do not find in the earlier Epistles. His style changed with his subject and his circumstances, as the style of every practical writer does.

Paul had an exceedingly mobile, an exceedingly impressible, and an exceedingly fertile mind. Paul was one who could take in as well as give out. To the end of his life he was always learning; and as he writes these private letters, for these you must notice, unlike the earlier Epistles of which we have spoken, are letters to individuals, he very naturally writes in a different style from that which characterized the letters written to the churches. A private letter is very different from an official communication; and a letter of direction to individuals is very different from a doctrinal treatise, such as we find in the Epistles to the Romans and to the Ephesians. These considerations are sufficient to account for whatever difference of

style we find between Paul's early Epistles and his later ones.

How much we should lack if these Epistles to Timothy and Titus were taken from us! They are the natural, and one might almost say the necessary, supplement to our other knowledge of Paul's life. If all that we knew with regard to the apostle's teaching ended with the Epistles to the Ephesians, the Philippians, and the Colossians, there would be a very large part of Paul's life and heart which would be still unknown to us. There are personal experiences here of which we should have no record if these Epistles were taken from us. How did Paul feel as the shadows of approaching death began to creep upon him? How did Paul look forward to the end of all things earthly? It is a delightful thing to me to have related here, in Paul's own words, an experience something like that of Christian in the "Pilgrim's Progress," when he is just about to step down into the cold river which separates him from the City of God on the other side. "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day." Here the apostle, after all his sufferings and trials, and in the very face of approaching death, is uttering these calm, confident words. This is a blessing to the whole church of Christ; it is a blessing to every one of us, because it gives us warrant for taking these same words upon our lips when we come to die.

There is instruction with regard to the conduct of

affairs in the church of Christ, which we should lack if these Epistles were taken from us. Paul had great anxiety with regard to the future. He wanted to put into other hands the work of preaching the gospel and of sustaining the church; and that he does in these Epistles. He charges Timothy to commit this same gospel which he preached to faithful men who should be able to teach others also. Paul was a whole theological seminary by himself. He desired to raise up and instruct those who should afterward teach the word of God. There is no indication that Paul felt depressed with regard to the past or future. When Luther came to this point in his life, where death began to draw nigh, great man as he was and great work as he had done, he felt as if his life had been spent in vain, and as if everything he had accomplished was about to be swept away. Great discouragement came upon him. In such a state of mind as that, his life ended. In the case of Paul we have a better illustration of faith in Christ than is given by Luther. Paul in his Roman prison, with the certainty that he was soon to be taken away, and with no one in all the world to take his place, still feels hopeful with regard to the church of God. His only anxiety is to commend to others the work he is so soon to lay down.

There is something very interesting in Paul's gravitating again toward Rome after his first imprisonment there. It seems as if there was a tremendous magnet in that capital of the world that drew him there. If the tradition be true that Peter also suffered martyrdom there, then both the apostles—Peter and Paul—felt as if the great thing to do was to conquer the

Eternal City for Christ. Although Paul has been imprisoned there, and has been in danger of martyrdom there, he still cannot rest until he gets back to Rome; he will dash himself during his last hours against that stone wall of Imperial Rome, with the assurance that Christ is able to strike that wall until it falls; and so in Rome he writes his last letter, the Second Epistle to Timothy.

Paul tells us in this Epistle that what we have ourselves received we must commit to faithful men, that they may be able to teach others also. In other words, every one of us has a responsibility for the extension and continuance of the preaching of Christ's truth after we are dead. It is our business to see that the gospel is preached and published to the generations that are yet to come.

THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON

PHILEMON was perhaps a native, and certainly a resident, of the city of Colosse, one of the Colossian Christians, therefore, to whom the Epistle to the Colossians was written. Colosse was a city in the southwest of Asia Minor, upon the banks of the river Lycus.

Philemon apparently was a convert of the apostle Paul, though Paul had never made a visit to Colosse. It would almost seem as if, led by trade, he had visited Ephesus, perhaps with Epaphras, and there come under the influence of the apostle's preaching during Paul's two or three years' stay in that great city. Being converted to Christ, he seconded the efforts of Epaphras to preach the gospel to his fellow townsmen; and being a man of wealth and hospitable instincts, he seems to have opened his house for the meetings of the church. So the apostle, in the Epistle, sends his salutations to the church that is in that house.

Some have thought, from a word that is used in the Epistle, namely, the word "partner," that the relations between Paul and Philemon were partly relations of business; and there is a curious use of commercial or business terms in the Epistle. A noted English interpreter, by the name of Plumptre, has actually written an essay upon the apostle Paul as a man of business, and has put together a number of allusions in the Acts of the Apostles and in Paul's various Epistles, which seem to show that the apostle was not at all

ignorant of business life. He thinks that, during those two or three years in Ephesus, when the apostle Paul was dependent, as he ordinarily was, upon the labor of his hands, he possibly made a sort of business connection with Philemon; that they had business transactions together; and that when Paul writes to him as his partner, he is using that term in a business sense. All this is somewhat precarious, and we may better conclude that the relation between Paul and Philemon was that of partnership in the Christian faith rather than of partnership in commercial enterprises. At any rate, it seems that Philemon was a fellow helper or fellow laborer of the apostle's, for Paul applies this term to him in the Epistle. Philemon was evidently engaged in the spreading of the gospel, and did everything he could to advance the cause of Christ.

In the salutations of the Epistle to Philemon, two other persons are mentioned. One of them is Apphia; and Apphia was without question, I think, the wife of Philemon. The third who is mentioned is Archippus; and since both these names are mentioned before the church is mentioned that worshiped in their house, it seems altogether possible that Archippus was their son. So we have three members of this Christian family brought to our attention: Philemon, Apphia his wife, and Archippus their son.

Archippus seems to have held some sort of official position in one of the churches of the neighborhood, probably the church of Laodicea, which was in walking distance of Colosse; and in the Epistle to the Colossians we have exhortations to Archippus that he take heed with regard to the office which he held, to fulfil

it. It is possible that Archippus was the elder, or presbyter, or pastor, of the neighboring church of Laodicea, although he may not have resided there. Since he was the son of Philemon and Apphia, and salutations of the apostle were extended to him in this letter to Philemon, it would seem that he still lived with his parents at Colosse.

There was another member of this family whom I have not yet mentioned. With these three, Philemon, his wife Apphia, and their son Archippus, that household included also a man of the lowest social stratum—the slave Onesimus. Onesimus was not only a slave; he was also a thief and a runaway. Apparently finding that the burdens and responsibilities of his position as slave were irksome to him, he fled from Colosse and from this relation of servitude; and in order to provide the means of his journeying he robbed his master, and so made his way to Rome. It may seem strange that a slave like Onesimus should have gone so far from his master and from his town; but we must remember that a city like Rome, where all nations congregated, furnished the very best hiding-place for a criminal. Rome was the easiest place to get at; for, as the old proverb reads, "All roads lead to Rome"; and at Rome he might most easily find employment. In Rome, moreover, there was the most to see and the largest experience of the world to be gained, so that there were many reasons why this runaway slave should have made his way as quickly as possible to the Imperial City.

But he made his way to the Imperial City only to be apprehended by the Lord Jesus, and to be made

the Lord's freedman. How it was that, in the city of Rome, he was brought into contact with the apostle Paul we do not know. The story is not told us. Perhaps hunger drove him to Paul for help. Perhaps conscience drove him to Paul for consolation. Perhaps Epaphras of Colosse, who was visiting Rome as a helper of the apostle Paul, met him in the street and persuaded Onesimus to accompany him to the house where the apostle was in surveillance, chained to a Roman soldier. Some way or other, Onesimus, the runaway slave, was brought into the presence of the apostle Paul; and Paul did not disdain to preach to him the gospel, just as he preached it to the low and the high, people of all ranks and all conditions; and the result of it seems to have been very quickly that Onesimus became a convert to the gospel of Christ, that his heart was changed and his whole temper and spirit and purpose were altered. Now he desired nothing so much as to make recompense for the past and to begin an entirely new Christian life. Paul seems to have been testing the reality of his conversion for a little while, for he declares in this very Epistle that Onesimus has been very helpful to him.

There were many services that Onesimus could render, and Paul commends him for those services; declares that he is loath to part with him; he would much prefer to keep him. But there were many reasons why Onesimus should not remain in Rome. Roman slavery was an awe-inspiring institution, and many a slave was crucified for smaller offenses than that which Onesimus had committed. Paul evidently thought that, for Onesimus' sake, and for the gospel's sake, it was desirable

that the gulf between him and his master should be filled up; and so, as Tychicus was going back to Ephesus and Colosse, and was to bear a letter to the church in Colosse, Paul sent Onesimus back with him. Into Onesimus' hands he placed what one might call a letter of introduction and commendation to his former master, urging that master to receive him kindly and in a Christian way, for Paul the apostle's sake. So, in the year 61, perhaps five years after the first foundation of the church at Colosse, Paul, in his first Roman imprisonment, writes the Epistle to Philemon. Onesimus takes it to Philemon, and presents it to his former master. What the result of that presentation is we do not know, but I think it cannot be doubtful that the letter was successful in accomplishing its end; that Philemon received Onesimus as a Christian brother; that Onesimus became his faithful servant again; and that so the breach was healed.

The course of thought in this Epistle is very touching and instructive. Although it is one of the shortest Epistles of the New Testament, it is most worthy of our consideration. Let us see how Paul treats this peculiar case that has come under his notice and has so engaged his interest.

The Epistle is not written for the purpose of touching any great point of doctrine. It is not intended to rebuke any serious crime or sin of Philemon's, to whom it is addressed. It is a private letter. And yet, because it is a private letter, unlike any other of the Epistles in the New Testament, unless it be the Second and Third Epistles of John, it has lessons of great importance for us. As the Epistle to the Ephesians has been

called the hymn of Christianity, this Epistle to Philemon may be called the idyl of Christianity.

The introduction to the Epistle contains a salutation from Paul and Timothy to Philemon of Colosse. How Timothy should be mentioned in the salutation I think may be made comprehensible if we remember that during the two or three years when Paul was preaching in Ephesus, Timothy was his helper, and Philemon may have made the acquaintance and have gained the friendship of Timothy in that place. When Paul writes from his Roman prison to Philemon, it is a very natural thing to include in his address the name of Timothy, his helper. After the first salutation, there come a few words of commendation. The apostle shows his gentlemanliness of spirit by the gracious and kindly way in which he begins his Epistles. He always takes men upon their most favorable side. He always mentions in a kindly and appreciative way what there is that is good in them. At the very beginning he praises Philemon's benevolence and faith, which had been a great comfort to the church of God, and had furnished instructive lessons to the world as to the reality and power of Christianity.

That was a good way to begin an Epistle in which he had a very serious and important request to make; and after having thus prefaced his Epistle by mentioning, what he could mention with great heartiness, the great benevolence and faith of Philemon, he next waives all claims upon Philemon based upon the fact of his apostleship. He leaves that all out of account; takes the place of the humble servant of Christ before him; and writes to him not as an apostle now, but as

Paul, the aged, a prisoner of Jesus Christ. In other words, he presents himself before Philemon as one marked by the shipwrecks and scourgings he had endured, and aged before his time; as one now suffering imprisonment; and as one who has before him possible martyrdom for the sake of Christ. But the great apostle does not presume upon his own authority, nor even upon the fact that Philemon owes to him his conversion; he does not threaten or command; he simply appeals to Philemon as a servant of Christ who had suffered much for the Master, and who might, on that account, have a tender place in Philemon's heart. Only after this gracious introduction does Paul come to the fact of Onesimus' fault.

He tells Philemon that he is well aware of the crime which Onesimus has committed. He speaks of him, however, as having become a convert of Christ, as having repented of his fault, as being now a changed man, and, as a proof of this change, he speaks of Onesimus' helpfulness to the apostle in his Roman imprisonment. He urges this as a proof that, in the future, he may be profitable both to Paul and Philemon again. The changed spirit of the man furnishes the basis of an appeal to Philemon, and there follows the one thing for which the Epistle was written, namely, an earnest entreaty on the part of Paul that Philemon will forgive Onesimus what he has done; forgive him the act of robbery that he has committed, forgive him that he has broken away from his master and run away to Rome, and that he will receive him back, not simply as the slave he was before, but as a brother in Christ.

It is a very beautiful thing that, in the Epistle to the Colossians, which was written at just this time, and which was sent by the hand of Tychicus along with Onesimus, Paul commends to the whole Colossian church this runaway but converted slave, declaring, "He is a faithful and beloved brother who is one of you." In other words, he sends him back to the Colossian church with his warm affection and strong recommendation; and then, at the same time, he sends this Epistle to Philemon, urging him not only to take Onesimus back into his service, but also to take him now into his heart, as a brother beloved in Christ. Then follow expressions of confidence on the part of Paul that Philemon will do this thing that he is asked to do, and a declaration that, if Onesimus is indebted to Philemon, Paul himself will undertake to pay that debt. He will take upon himself the burden of repaying the pecuniary loss that Philemon has sustained, if Philemon requires it. Yet he reminds Philemon that, being his convert to Christ, he owes to Paul all that he has, owes to him something of infinite value, owes to him his hope in Christ and his hope of heaven. It is as much as to say: "If you think it well, I will pay to you all you have lost by this act of robbery on the part of Onesimus; but still you will remember how much you owe to me." All is left to Philemon's good will. Philemon shall do just as he pleases, but, at any rate, Paul wants him to receive Onesimus back; and, as to any pecuniary loss, Paul will sustain that, if there is any pecuniary loss to be borne. Paul asks Philemon to prepare a lodging for him, in prospect of his coming visit, which evidently shows that, in this first

imprisonment, Paul expected that his appeal to Cæsar would be successful, and that he would be released. That visit he undoubtedly did pay; some time thereafter he was arrested and taken back to Rome to his second imprisonment; that second imprisonment ended with his trial, condemnation, and execution.

The Epistle to Philemon consists of only eighteen or twenty verses, but it is certainly one of the most beautiful private letters that have come down to us from all antiquity. There is a letter written by the elder Pliny to a friend of his, which is just about as long as this Epistle, and is written on behalf of a slave who has also run away from his master, and whom Pliny seeks to restore; and these two Epistles—the heathen and the Christian—have been put side by side with one another. In the heathen epistle the arguments for the restoration of the slave are all based upon the consideration of friendship, and there is no appeal to Christian love. There is no request that the master will take the slave back to his heart, and will consider him as a Christian brother; there is no appeal to religious considerations, but simply an appeal to the good temper and kindness and personal friendship of the person addressed; so that, as compared with this Epistle to Philemon, the whole spirit of it is a very different one. Although it is a noble example of heathen kindness and benevolence, it shows no trace of the principle which actuates this Epistle of Paul to Philemon. It is a very curious fact that in the fourth century there were Fathers of the church who were inclined to deny this Epistle a place in the canon, simply because they thought it was so trivial and

unedifying. How they mistook the meaning and importance of it! To them, the battle of the creeds, as Bishop Lightfoot said, was of more importance than the fate of a single slave. Those were the days of slavery, and these Christian Fathers could hardly conceive how the apostle could have taken so much interest in the fate of a man so far beneath him in social standing. We do not need to go back to antiquity to find illustrations of the indifference of prominent Christians to the wants and woes of the illiterate and the poor. In the last century, Whitefield, the great evangelist, did not hesitate to be the owner of slaves, even at the time when he was preaching the gospel of Christ with the greatest power and success. It took a great while to convince Christendom that to have a fellow man your chattel and property is inconsistent with the equal brotherhood of the gospel of Christ. History has justified the position and rank of this Epistle in the New Testament, and I think there are two respects in which it is exceedingly instructive to us.

In the first place, it gives us a beautiful example of the proper spirit and method of Christian intercourse. This private letter of one Christian to another, preferring a request which seems to him of importance, has a spirit and method in it that is of very great value. The apostle had the right to command, but he does not command at all. How humble, how unpretentious, how quiet, how kindly, how pleading is the tone! Everything is put on the ground of Christian love, and of Christian love alone.

If we Christians would bring over our brethren to any project of ours, if we would persuade them to do

what we wish, the proper tone on our part is not the tone of command, nor the tone of threatening, nor the tone of remonstrance, but rather the tone of entreaty and persuasion. Christ's method is the quiet and humble method of Christian love. An appeal to the heart, which puts everything upon the basis of love to Christ, will accomplish wonders; when the other way, the hard way, the remonstrating way, the threatening way, will accomplish nothing. Paul gives us in this letter, first of all, a model of the methods of influencing Christian friends and of doing Christian work in the church of Christ.

As a second and last piece of instruction, this Epistle shows us how Christianity undermines and finally does away with the great organized wrongs of human society. It has been said that the word "emancipation" was trembling upon the apostle's lips; and yet he does not utter it. Christianity does not aim to accomplish sudden social revolutions. Christianity does not begin from the outside and work inward; it begins within and works outward. It does not begin with the mass of men and then come to the individual; it begins with the individual and so spreads to the mass. It does not take the great institutions of the world, those creations of organized iniquity, and by one fell swoop destroy them in an instant; it infuses into them a new spirit and temper, and that new spirit and temper permeates them like leaven in the meal. You look, and this great organization of iniquity is a thing of the past. So it was with the despotism of the Cæsars. The apostle Paul did not fulminate against the Roman Empire, with its wickedness and tyranny. The powers

that be are ordained by God; so long as human government exists he urges us to obey the government; but he puts the spirit of love into human hearts, so that, little by little, it does away with this system of despotism. So he did not utter any denunciation of slavery. Denunciation would have accomplished little. Paul preached Christ; and when people saw that Christ loved the meanest slave so much that he gave his very life to save him, the master could no longer tread that slave under his feet. Among the Hebrews, slavery was not so great an evil, because they themselves had been slaves in times past, and that gave them a feeling of compassion for those who were in bonds to them. Slavery among the Jews could last only six years with any individual. The seventh year was the day of redemption, and the slave was set free. The number of slaves among the Jews was very small; and, where that is the case, the master does not fear the slave, and is not called upon to use measures of cruelty.

How different from the Athenians and Romans! In Athens and Rome, in the days of power and splendor, the number of slaves and freemen was four to one; and in order to keep that vast mass of slaves under the yoke, there were cruelties and restrictions such as were never known among the Hebrews. The slave could be given away; he could be sold; he could be bequeathed by will; he could be put to death; and no one could call his master to account. It was not so among the Hebrews. Slavery had the whole Roman Empire at its back. It would have been useless for Paul to urge its destruction, or to speak against it; he preached Christ and him crucified; he brought men to Christ

and filled men's hearts with the love of Christ; and, with that love of Christ within, they became patient and tender toward their slaves, and counted them their brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus; so there was a new spirit infused into society, which gradually led to the liberation of the slave. We see the fruits in these Christian times, in the liberating of two hundred millions of serfs by the Czar in Russia, and in the emancipation of three million slaves in the Southern States of America. The day will come when there will not be one single slave upon this footstool. We see the dawning of that day already. Slavery still exists in Africa, but all the civilized nations of the world are banded together to put it down. When slavery has vanished from the face of the earth, its disappearance will be the result of the preaching of Christ's gospel, and of that era of human liberty and equality this Epistle to Philemon is the prelude and prophecy.

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

The Epistle to the Hebrews presents more enigma than does any other Epistle of the New Testament. The origin of it and the destination of it are uncertain. We are not sure whether it is a treatise or an Epistle. It takes the Old Testament itself to prove the insufficiency of the Old Testament, and to show that the Old Testament economy is to vanish away. The form of doctrine which we find in it is intermediate between that of Paul and John, and this suggests questions as to authorship which are difficult to answer. Although it is written in the purest and most elegant Greek of any writing of the New Testament, it was written, not to Greek or Gentile Christians, but to Hebrews; and it appears before us, like that Melchisedec who makes so great a figure in the Epistle itself, "without father or mother, without beginning of days or end of years," yet shows forth the Lord Jesus Christ, and the glory of the new covenant in some aspects which are not elsewhere revealed. It is not necessary to the inspiration of a New Testament document that we should be able to tell the precise source or author of it; it is only necessary that it should come from God and should be adapted to the religious instruction of mankind. The history of its reception in the Christian church is itself very peculiar. It was a stormy history through which it passed. During the first century after it was written we do not know that

there was the least doubt as to its genuineness; but the two centuries that followed, in the Roman church and in the North African churches, were centuries in which its authenticity was very widely doubted; and it was only the investigation of Jerome in the fourth century, and the subsequent examination that was given it by Augustine, that led these distinguished church Fathers to the conclusion that it was of veritable canonical authority, and that finally led the Western church to unite with the Eastern church in accepting it; so that all doubt was removed and its canonical authority was settled for all time.

The doubts that arose, with regard to the genuineness and authority of the Epistle, circled around the question of its authorship; and this is the question which we must first discuss. Who was the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews? The superscription, "The Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews," is not a part of the Epistle at all. That title is of later authorship; we must set that aside just as if it were not, and must ask ourselves what the evidence is that it was the work of Paul or the work of some other. Origen, the great church Father, gives us a sentence like this, "Who wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews, God only knows"; and I suppose that we ourselves might take upon our lips that very same sentence to-day. One thing is now generally concluded by the great mass of commentators and interpreters, and that is that the apostle Paul did not write the Epistle to the Hebrews. It is not, in any proper sense, an Epistle of Paul.

There are two sorts of reasons upon which we base this conclusion. First, there are doctrinal reasons; and

secondly, there are rhetorical reasons. The doctrinal reasons are these—that, in his discussion of the great question of human salvation, the author of the Epistle follows a method that is entirely different from that of the apostle Paul. If you will examine the Epistles of Paul, and his speeches in the Acts of the Apostles, you will find that Paul always begins with the state and condition of mankind, and from that state and condition of mankind rises to the divine remedy and the divine salvation. On the contrary, the method of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews is to begin with the divine Saviour and his great work for human redemption, and to come thence to the consideration of man's needs and his method of appropriating the work of God. The author of this Epistle, moreover, regards the death of Christ as connected more immediately and prominently with the work of intercession than with the work of atonement. He sets Christ before us in his priestly intercession in heaven, rather than in his priestly atonement upon the earth. To the mind of the author, the cross of Christ is mainly an offering in the heavenly sanctuary. It is rather the basis of intercession there than the basis of atonement here.

When you come to the rhetorical characteristics of the Epistle, you find that, both in minute details and in its general character, the Epistle is very unlike the Epistles of the apostle Paul. These matters of style are very difficult to expound in popular discourse. One who is acquainted with the original Greek and who has read Paul's Epistles, and who has then read this Epistle with a view to its relation to those, will recognize the fact that, in style, this is entirely different from them.

There is nothing by which the style of a person can be judged so accurately and correctly as by his use of adverbs and conjunctions, those little connecting parts of speech upon which very little conscious attention is bestowed, yet which indicate the method of the author's thought, rise spontaneously to his lips, and flow spontaneously from his pen. The conjunctions and adverbs that are used in all the Epistles of Paul are very different from those which are used in the Epistle to the Hebrews; in fact, one conjunction that is used fifty times in this Epistle to the Hebrews you do not find even once in the Epistles of Paul.

There is a characteristic that is more evident and more easy to describe. I refer to the general rhetorical style. This is totally different from that of Paul's Epistles. The style of the Epistle to the Hebrews is flowing and fervid and rhetorical; while the style of the apostle Paul is predominantly dialectic. Paul is full of what we might call anacolutha—sentences that begin and do not end; but you have no such sentence in this Epistle to the Hebrews. The style of the apostle Paul is that of a man whose emotions frequently break through all common forms of speech, and show themselves superior to the outward methods of expression. It is like a mountain torrent. There are very few places where it flows on in a smooth and unbroken course; it is evermore dashing from point to point, breaking away from the even and steady method of address, and reveling in that which is sudden and unexpected. There is picturesqueness in it, and emotion frequently breaks through the natural forms of ordinary speech. The Epistle to the Hebrews is character-

ized by no such bursts, by no such breaks. It flows on steadily, like the course of a great river through an open plain.

Our own Doctor Kendrick has said very truly that the apostle Paul is rhetorical when he cannot help it; but the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews is always rhetorical, because he can never be anything else. This is the real difference between the rhetoric of the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Epistles of the apostle Paul. There is now almost universal consent among scholars that Paul was not the author of this Epistle. It is equally difficult to believe that the substance of the Epistle was furnished by Paul, but that the form of it was furnished by some helper of his as, for example, Luke or Timothy. It could not possibly be Timothy, because there is an allusion to Timothy as a third person in the Epistle itself. Luke has often been mentioned as one to whom Paul might have given the substance of the document, to be put into form by Luke himself. But there is such a unity in the Epistle, the thought and the expression are so welded together, and both of them are so independent and so unlike what we know of the apostle Paul, that it is impossible to believe the author of it a mere subordinate. The Epistle gives every evidence of an original writer, who drew his material mainly from his own soul, under the influence of the Spirit of God.

The most plausible hypothesis that has ever been advanced is that it was the work of Apollos. Luther first gave this suggestion to the world, and one of the strongest advocates of this authorship of the Epistle is our own Doctor Kendrick. In the commentary of Lange

on the Epistle to the Hebrews, which Doctor Kendrick edited, you may find this view very admirably drawn out. If you remember what is said of the work and characteristics of Apollos in the Acts of the Apostles, you will see at once that there is great verisimilitude in this hypothesis. The author of this Epistle must certainly have been a Jew. Well, Apollos was a Jew. The author of this Epistle was a very learned man, and the Acts of the Apostles tells us that Apollos was a learned man. The author of this Epistle shows great familiarity with the works of Philo Judæus, the Alexandrian, and he uses many phrases that are the same as those used by Philo. Now the Acts tells us that Apollos was a Jew of Alexandria. The author of this Epistle had a wonderful knowledge of Old Testament Scriptures; and the Acts of the Apostles tells us that Apollos was mighty in the Scriptures.

The author of this Epistle shows a wonderful power and skill in proving from the Old Testament the Messiahship of Christ, and the glory of the New Covenant; and the Acts of the Apostles tells us that this Apollos powerfully convinced the Jews, proving to them that Jesus is the Christ. Indeed, in the description of Apollos which the Acts gives us, we have packed together in a few verses the most remarkable characteristics of this Epistle, and all these characteristics are declared to be the characteristics of Apollos. So, if we are to settle down upon any single person mentioned in the New Testament as the author, we may settle down upon Apollos. Timothy is mentioned in the Epistle as one with whom the author had acquaintance and apparently had intercourse; and we know that

Timothy, having been instructed by Paul, was Paul's messenger to Corinth. Since Apollos was in Corinth at the time, there is abundant reason to believe that Apollos and Timothy were intimately acquainted with each other. But leaving this matter of authorship, although I think the general consent of scholars is more and more fastening upon Apollos as the most probable author of the Epistle, let us pass on to ask to what persons this Epistle was addressed.

You may say it was addressed to the Hebrews. But who were the Hebrews, and where were the Hebrews? There were Hebrews, or Jews, scattered all through the Roman Empire. Was this Epistle to the Hebrews written to Jews who were thus scattered among the Gentiles? No, very decidedly not; for it is very plain, as you read the Epistle, that those to whom the Epistle is addressed constituted a Christian community by themselves. It is not to the multitude of churches, but to a number of Christians within a certain locality, that the Epistle is sent. This Jewish community, apparently, has no connection with Gentiles. There is no mention of Gentiles in the Epistle; no indication that the Jewish Christians to whom the Epistle was written were in any particular danger from Gentiles; no intimation that they were tempted by Gentiles, or had work to do with Gentiles. No, the persons to whom the Epistle is addressed are living quite apart from Gentile influence, and there is no such variety among them as there was in those churches to which Paul addressed most of his Epistles. Now there is no place in the Roman Empire at this time which so fits the circumstances and conditions which I have

mentioned, as the city of Jerusalem and the region of Palestine around about it. That these Hebrews were in Jerusalem and in its vicinity is altogether the most plausible hypothesis.

We find, by reading the Epistle, that these Hebrews were in special danger of being drawn away from their faith, because of their exclusion from the services of the temple. They were in the midst of persecution, and were tempted to apostatize from the faith of Christ. This Epistle was written to warn them of these temptations, and to urge them to be steadfast in their allegiance to Jesus.

These conditions are fulfilled in Jerusalem and in Palestine at a particular point of time in the New Testament history, and that leads us to the question when it was that the Epistle was written. Certain considerations lead us to believe that it cannot have been earlier than the year 60.

In the first place, it is pretty clear that it was to a second generation of Christians that the Epistle was written. It is intimated in the Epistle that those who are addressed had not received the gospel at first hand from Christ. They were not persons who had been contemporary with Jesus; but they had received the word from those who had seen Jesus and had heard him. Therefore, the point of time when the Epistle is written must be twenty-five or thirty years after the death of the Saviour. Another generation had sprung up. Moreover, it is intimated that certain leaders of the church had suffered martyrdom for their faith; many of its members had suffered persecution by the spoiling of their goods; and they are still under

reproach and exposed to danger. Now, if you remember, immediately after the death of Christ and the ascension of the Saviour, the disciples returned from Bethany to Jerusalem with great joy; and they were found continually in the temple. There was no objection or difficulty in the way of Christians, at that time, worshiping in the temple and having all the privileges that formerly belonged to them as Jews. In other words, at the first, Christians were thought to be only a sect or school of the Jews. They were not thrust out completely from the synagogue or from the temple. When we come on to the year 58, at Paul's last visit to Jerusalem, we find the beginning of a different state of things. We find prejudice aroused against Christians. We find hostility and opposition. A riot is instigated against Paul by the mere suspicion, the unjust suspicion, that he has brought a Gentile Christian into the court of the Jews belonging to the temple. That bitterness of spirit which had developed itself against Christians would lead us to expect, a little later in the history, precisely what we find in this Epistle to the Hebrews, namely, that there would be a disposition among the Jews to thrust Christians out altogether. It must be, therefore, after the year 58, it must be after the year 60, that this Epistle was written. It seems to me altogether probable that the date of this Epistle is as late as the year 67, just after the martyrdom of Paul at Rome, and just after Timothy had made that visit to Rome which Paul requested, and had shared his imprisonment, for we find in this Epistle that Timothy has just been set at liberty. If this supposition be true, it must be about the year 67 that

the Epistle was written; that is, just before the destruction of Jerusalem, which took place in the year 70. It could not have been later than that, because the temple is spoken of as still standing. The dates between which we must confine the writing of the Epistle are somewhere between the year 66 and the year 70; and if we must fix upon a definite year, the year 67 is as good as any we can fix upon.

The object of the Epistle I have already touched upon. It was to warn the Hebrew Christians against the danger of apostatizing from Christ. What was this danger? Why, the danger arising from the fact that, having been born and bred in Jerusalem or its neighborhood, they had been accustomed to regard the outward worship of the temple as essential to their Christian faith. They had been accustomed to think that the sacrifices that were offered day by day, being of divine appointment, were to be perpetual, and that those who were thrust out from the worship of the sanctuary and from participation in these sacrificial offerings were thrust out from God, and might lose their hope of the Messianic salvation.

The Epistle endeavors to counteract all this, by showing these Hebrew Christians that the laws of the old dispensation were only a type of the new dispensation that was to come; that, as they had Christ in their hearts as their heavenly sacrifice and intercessor, they could now do away with the old sacrifices of the temple and with the old temple worship; and that they would be none the worse for the change. Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. Christ is the divine Saviour. If they have Christ they have all.

There are three main divisions of the doctrinal treatment, in which the author of the Epistle shows that the Old Testament system is only the type and the prophecy of the New. You remember how he opens his Epistle. The subject is stated in that first verse. "God," he says, "who at many times and in varied ways spoke unto the fathers by the prophets, hath, in these last days, spoken unto us by his Son." Then he goes on to describe him as being the effluence of the Father's glory, as being the express image of his person, as having purged our sins by his sacrifice, and as now sitting at the right hand, on the throne, of God; so, at the very beginning, he suggests that the new is better than the old, and that the old way is only the foreshadowing of the new. Now that the new has come, the substance has come, and the shadow may flee away. Then he proceeds to show that this Christ, this divine Redeemer, who has purged our sins and now sits in the heavenly sanctuary for us, is, first, superior to the angels, the mediators of the old covenant; secondly, is superior to Moses and Joshua, the leaders of the old economy; and, thirdly, is superior to Aaron, the great high priest of the Old Testament dispensation. Having shown that Christ is superior to all these mediators of the old covenant, he shows that the only personage in the Old Testament who can fitly set forth the glory and dignity of Christ is that strange and mysterious person, Melchisedec, who was both king and priest, and who sprang all of a sudden in the history, without any account of his ancestry or of what became of him, as a sort of type of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour and Redeemer of the world.

Then the author goes on to speak of the great superiority of this new redemption and economy, this high priesthood of Jesus in heaven and his heavenly service, to anything that could possibly exist upon the earth, where the priesthood could continue only a little while by reason of death. Here we have One who is made priest, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life, and therefore, not for a day, nor for a few days, but forever and forever, living to make intercession for us. If he who is the one great Priest, of whom the Old Testament priests were only types, has come at last, why, the Old Testament priests may go, we need them no longer. Christ abides; he is the same, yesterday, today, and forever. Then the latter portion of the Epistle is a practical part, which draws the inference that, if these things be true, then the one duty of every Christian is to hold fast to Christ, and to let the Old Testament dispensation, with its types and its symbols, pass away into forgetfulness.

The beginning of this practical part is that long catalogue of the heroes of faith, those worthies of the Old Testament that had been true to God, in spite of all manner of temptation, persecution, and danger, and who furnish for us models for the faith of the New Testament. Since Jesus, our forerunner, has entered into the heavenly sanctuary, we are to follow him, running the race that is set before us, "looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now set down at the right hand of the throne of God." So the practical

part of the Epistle succeeds and supplements the doctrinal part, and impresses its applications upon us.

Three things may be said with regard to this Epistle, all of which are points of general interest, aside from the general course of thought which I have mentioned. The first is this, that the Epistle to the Hebrews sets before us Jesus Christ as an absolute, unique, and divine High Priest, ordained to transact with God for us, as the one High Priest, of whom the Old Testament high priests were only the types and symbols. That is the first great thought of the Epistle to the Hebrews. We have such a High Priest who has entered into the heavenly sanctuary. Let us, therefore, go boldly to the throne of grace, that we may find mercy and grace to help us in our times of need. This High Priest is one with God, the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person; but he is one with us also. No other passage of the New Testament presents to us the human side of our sympathizing High Priest as this does. He took upon himself our nature; was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin; and, for that reason, he is able to sympathize with us, and succor us when we are tempted. There is no more beautiful or pathetic passage than this in the whole Bible.

The second great lesson which the Epistle to the Hebrews teaches is that of the brotherly relation which the Lord Jesus Christ sustains to us. He is not only God, but also man; our elder brother is upon the throne; our elder brother is interceding for us in the heavenly sanctuary. Since this High Priest is both God and man, since there unites in him all that can

make high-priesthood perfect, this high-priestly service is the final one. No greater revelation than this is ever to be expected from God; it is the last revelation of God to man; it is the most perfect disclosure of the love and justice of the King on high. Therefore, Christianity is not one of many revelations; it is not to be put side by side with Buddhism or Confucianism, as if there were only some good in it, just as there is some good in them; but Christianity is the one and only revelation, of which all these others are only faint foreshadowings. Here, in Christianity, we see brought to a focus all those scattered rays that shone dimly amid the darkness of the heathen world. All that is good in heathenism is found in Christianity, and infinitely more. Christianity is the one and final revelation of God to man.

So there follows the third and last great lesson. "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh"; for, if he that rejecteth the Old Testament dispensation did not escape, of what punishment shall he be thought worthy who has trodden under his feet the blood of the Son of God, and has put his Saviour to an open shame?

Nowhere in the whole New Testament do we find such solemn warnings against apostasy as we find here in the Epistle to the Hebrews. The apostle has set before us the exceeding glory of this new dispensation. He has shown us that it is an absolute, complete, and final thing, the last word that God has spoken or that God can speak to man. Let us be sure that we do not turn our backs upon him. Let us be sure that, having come to a knowledge of the truth, we do not turn away from it, and forget what we have learned, to the

destruction of our souls. Let us accept the warning, let us go on in the Christian course. Leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to perfection. In his warning against apostasy, the apostle does not mean us to understand that any that have once experienced the real grace of God shall ever be left to fall away to their own destruction. He says to these very persons: "Brethren, I am persuaded better things of you, even although we thus speak." Yet it is very needful for the perseverance of the saints that these warnings be given. Only by appreciating the greatness of our danger, and the necessity of our persevering in holiness, shall we be kept from falling away. Let us endure, therefore, to the end, in order that we may be saved.

THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

THREE persons named James are mentioned in the New Testament, and it has been a question which of these persons was the author of our Epistle. Some have thought that the author was James, the brother of John and the son of Zebedee; but this seems quite impossible, because he suffered martyrdom in the year 44, before the dispersion of the Jewish Christians which is mentioned in its opening words. It was after this James, the brother of John, was slain, and largely because of his death, that members of the church fled from Jerusalem and made their way beyond the bounds of Palestine. When the apostle James died they had not yet gotten even so far as Antioch, and it was consequently impossible then to write to the twelve tribes of Christians who were scattered abroad, as the author of this Epistle does. The apostle James, moreover, could hardly have been the author, for the reason that before his death the internal organization of the Christian church was not so perfectly developed as it appears to have been in this Epistle.

The indications are far more favorable to the view that the author of the Epistle is James, our Lord's brother, the oldest of those brothers of our Lord with whom we meet so frequently in the Gospels and in the Acts of the Apostles. There were four of these, James, and Joses, Simon and Judas, and there were sisters belonging to the family also.

Paul, in his Epistle to the Galatians, speaks of James, the Lord's brother, as being the president of the church at Jerusalem. He was one of "the pillars." He had authority; his words were treated with respect such as belongs to no one else outside of the narrow apostolic circle; and it is probably to him that we must ascribe this Epistle.

There still remains a question that is quite interesting; namely, whether this James, the brother of our Lord, was identical with James the son of Alphæus or James the Less, who was one of the apostles. In the apostolic circle there were two persons by the name of James. There was James the son of Zebedee, and there was James the son of Alphæus; and it is a question whether the James who is the brother of our Lord was not also this apostle.

There are some reasons to believe that this was not so, and that the James of whom we read here was a third person, entirely distinct from either one of the two persons by the name of James who belonged to the apostles. One reason is this: that after Jesus had completed his choice of the apostles, the brethren of our Lord were yet unbelievers; they could not have belonged to the apostles, because the apostles were all known and numbered before the time of their conversion. Moreover, when we find that the brethren of our Lord are mentioned at all, we find them mentioned in such a way as to distinguish them from the apostles. For example, in that long-continued meeting for prayer in the upper room at Jerusalem, which ended at the day of Pentecost, we read that there were gathered the Twelve, who are mentioned by name, with the women

and with Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren; where you see that his brethren are put last, are distinguished from the apostles, are evidently different persons. The James, therefore, who is the brother of our Lord, could not also have been one of the apostles. Why is it that the Lord's brethren, in this enumeration of the persons who are present and who are praying for the descent of the Spirit, are mentioned last? Why, simply because they were the last to come into the number of Christ's disciples. After the Twelve had been chosen they still remained unbelieving.

These brethren of our Lord, who had been accustomed to look up to Jesus in his life at Nazareth as simply the elder brother of the household, and to see him perform the common work of the carpenter, had of all men found it most difficult to realize the fact that he was the Messiah sent from God, the very Son of God, who had come to deliver the world.

It must have required a struggle of faith, it must have required a conflict with preconceptions, such as no others passed through. Let us not blame them too much. A prophet is not without honor save in his own country and in his own house, said Jesus, with probable reference to these very brethren of his.

The very nearness which we sustain to Christ in an external relation may make it the more difficult for us to apprehend his thoroughly spiritual nature; and so it was with them. Therefore, it was not until Christ's work was completed, and the greatest of miracles, the resurrection of our Lord from the dead, had taken place, that these brethren of our Lord had their doubts removed, and came into the number of his

disciples. It was only when Christ, the risen Saviour, in the fulness of a brother's love, appeared to this James singly, that James' doubts were all removed, that his skepticism was swept away, that his heart was broken with love for him whom up to that time he had refused to recognize as his Lord.

There is something very touching, it seems to me, in the way in which James begins his Epistle. He says, "James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ." How much that meant for him who had been seated side by side with our Saviour, at the same board for many years, and who had refused to recognize him! And why is it that James, in the beginning of his Epistle, does not mention the fact that he is the brother of our Lord? Why, very much for the same reason that Paul does not think that he can take any glory to himself, since he persecuted the church of God. So James hardly thinks that he is worthy to be called the brother of our Lord; at least, he will not join that title to his name when he writes to others. Moreover, he will not seem to claim a greater nearness to Christ than belongs to Christ's chosen apostles. There is great humility, I think, in the way in which James begins his Epistle. So, we have James, the brother of our Lord, not one of the Twelve, but one called after the Twelve, one converted after the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, as the author of this Epistle, and proclaiming himself to be, not an apostle of Christ, but simply a servant of God and of Jesus Christ our Lord. There yet remains another question with regard to the personality of James; namely this: whether the phrase "brother of our

Lord" means that James was a son of the same mother, or whether he was a cousin, or a son of the same father. The Roman Catholic Church has a great prejudice against the idea that Mary should ever have had other children than Jesus. The perpetual virginity of Mary is one of its most cherished dogmas. This dogma had its origin in the superior sanctity which that Church attaches to celibacy. It is thought derogatory to the mother of our Lord that she ever should have been the mother of other children. But the seventh verse of the second chapter of Luke's Gospel has the words, " Brought forth her firstborn son," and a candid reader would naturally infer from the fact of Jesus' being the " firstborn," that Mary had other children after.

Plato is, in a similar way, called by one of his Greek biographers, Diogenes Laertius, the firstborn child; yet, as a matter of fact, we know that Plato had two brothers and a sister. So it is altogether probable that Luke uses this word in its literal sense, and implies that there were other children born to Mary and Joseph after the birth of our Saviour. While the words in Luke cannot be said to make it certain, they at least show that, in the mind of the writer, there was no prejudice against the idea that Mary should have had other children. He never thought it necessary to the sanctity of Mary that Jesus should have been her only child.

Christianity gives honor to marriage; and this idea that Mary, the virgin, should have had no other children than Christ, is based not only upon a misinterpretation of Scripture, but upon a radical error with

regard to marriage itself, as if marriage were something dishonorable, and the married state was not so lofty or so pure as the unmarried state. Protestantism has evermore protested against such a doctrine as this. It is altogether probable that Mary had other children, and that these other children were the four whose names are given to us. It is significant that James is always mentioned as the first among them.

Being thus related to Jesus by ties of blood, James would seem to have had claim to the position of president or pastor of the church in Jerusalem. It was not fit that an apostle should have that permanent relation to a local church. That, I think, in itself is an *a priori* argument against the idea that the James of whom we are speaking was an apostle, either James the son of Zebedee or James the son of Alphæus, for an apostle was one who had wider relations, one who had authority over the universal church. It was not fit that an apostle should narrow down his regards to a particular local body. It was, rather, proper that one who was outside that circle of the apostles should be the president of the church at Jerusalem.

If this be true that James was the brother—the half-brother, shall I say?—of our Lord, is it not wonderful that Jesus, when he hung upon the cross and was making provision for the comfort of his mother after his death, should not have commended her to the care of James, rather than to the care of John, who did not belong to his own immediate family? How plain it is that relationship in the faith is a closer relationship than mere relationship of blood! When Jesus hung upon the cross, neither James, Joses, Simon, nor Judas

belonged to the number of the disciples. They were still unbelievers! How unfit it would have been that Jesus should have commended his mother to the care of one whose heart was yet unrenewed, one who was not a disciple! It would have been a poor house to send her to; and, besides, it is very questionable whether there *was* any such home. Jesus was the elder brother. Jesus was the head of that household. Jesus' death broke up the household, and he had not had where to lay his head. They had no home. John had such a home. John appears to have been a man of means. John appears to have had a house in Jerusalem. Jesus commended his mother to John because John was a believer; because John stood to Jesus himself in a closer relationship than any one of these unbelieving brethren did; because John had a home and was ready to receive her. Surely here are reasons enough why Jesus should prefer John to James.

James, however, was speedily renewed in the whole spirit and temper of his mind; and when, at last, Jesus had ascended, we see him, with his brethren, meeting together with the apostles and with Mary, the mother of our Lord, and with certain women, in that upper chamber, to pray for the descent of the Holy Spirit.

It was very natural that this James who was closely related to Christ, after he was converted to the faith of Jesus, should have been pitched upon as the very first for the presidency of the local church. In spite of his previous unbelief, he held a high place in the minds of the disciples for the rectitude of his life, the austere and thoroughgoing righteousness of his conduct. He was surnamed "The Just," because of his

severe and unbending integrity. Tradition says of him that he never partook either of wine or of flesh, and that his knees were hard and horny, like the knees of a camel, because he had spent so much time prostrate upon them in prayer.

So we find James becoming the head of the church of the circumcision; find him a Jew, preaching the gospel to the Jews; find him a pillar of the church; and, at the time of the council at Jerusalem, when the church at Antioch sent to ask the advice of the Jerusalem church with regard to that difficult matter of the treatment of Gentile converts, we find him presiding over the meeting of the council and, when all has been said upon one side and upon the other side, standing forth to give his verdict. And, just so soon as he has uttered his verdict that the Gentiles shall be regarded as fellow heirs, the whole church at once assents to his decision, and accepts this decision as its own. To the very end of his life, which apparently took place in the year 62, James maintained this unbroken consistency. It was the consistency of a perfect character, of a spotless integrity, of a holy life. There was great fitness in putting James in just the position that he held, and an equal fitness in his addressing just the persons who are addressed in this Epistle.

We must remember that James was a Jewish Christian. James apparently never left the Old Testament church. James apparently never forsook the worship and service of the temple. James regarded Christianity as a developed Judaism; and the position he takes in this Epistle reminds us very strongly of our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount, on the one hand, and

of the preaching of John the Baptist on the other. Righteousness of life seems to be the keynote of all his writing. It was a very fit thing that this kinsman of our Lord and this Puritan Jew, as one might call him, should have exercised this great influence and should have had this prominent and important position in the days of the Jewish church. How natural it was that he should be looked up to and respected by the Jews around him, as no other person could have been looked up to and respected. There were many pious Jews who might be influenced in favor of the gospel, but who could not be influenced by Gentile Christians, or by Paul. They would have been most seriously prejudiced against Paul; but they could be influenced in favor of the gospel by one who was out and out a Jew, who gloried in the ancestral traditions, who was careful to maintain the forms of Jewish righteousness, who paid respect to all the external services and observances of the temple. These things were dear to him. This James could constitute a transition from the old to the new, as almost no other man could do. There was a divine providence in it toward that multitude of pious Jews who could not break away from the ancestral worship, that the gospel of Christ should be represented so long and so faithfully by one of their own number, who showed them that Judaism was perfectly consistent with a higher faith, and that they might be Christians while yet at the same time they were Jews, so far as the outward services and observances of the temple were concerned. For many years, even for a quarter of a century, Christians did not give up the services of the temple. In the temple and from house

to house they met, and they rejoiced in God. I say it was a marvelous providence to the pious Jews, who had not yet been convinced of the truth of Christianity, that Christ had a representative who preached continually by his faithful and consistent life, and by his love for the old Jewish traditions, while yet at the same time he was a convert to the new religion.

It was only when this long and faithful ministry to the Jewish Christians came to its end; it was only when the Jews, in the obstinacy of their unbelief, took hold of this same James, cast him down from a pinnacle of the temple, stoned him with stones, and beat him to death with a fuller's club, it was only then that the iniquity of the Jews seems to have reached its height; and that was only a little before the storm of wrath burst upon Jerusalem. God gave the Jews a chance to receive the gospel for a long time after the death and resurrection of Christ, and he gave them one of their own number to preach it to them. It was only when this long ministry of James, the brother of our Lord, had proved utterly unavailing and had ended in the martyr's death, that the destruction of Jerusalem came, and swept away that devoted city. But there was great fitness in such a representative of the Old Testament piety being permitted to hold on and work, while, at the same time, he was the representative of the new gospel. James constituted a bridge, and a transition, from the Old Testament to the New Testament ministry.

This Epistle of James has in it an interest peculiarly its own. It is the first Epistle of the New Testament. It is the earliest written document of the

whole canon. It was probably written as early as the year 47, twenty years before the Epistle to the Hebrews and long before any of the Epistles of Paul. There is an air of antiquity, savoring of the Old Testament, about it, such as there is about no other of the New Testament documents.

What was the occasion of the writing of the Epistle? It is evident that, at the time it was written, Christianity had spread abroad, and that Jewish Christians had become so scattered as to be called "the Dispersion." Yet they have not gotten so far as Antioch, nor have they begun to penetrate the heathen world. They seem rather to be confined still to the bounds of Palestine. James had perhaps been the means of converting many of them, and as these converts would come back, from time to time, to Jerusalem to attend the feasts, and his personal connection with them would not cease, he would follow them into their distant homes, he would be solicitous in regard to their spiritual condition; and from his position of authority and influence he would naturally write to them his instructions and requests.

Tradition relates that James never left his place of labor in Jerusalem. Whatever influence he exerted upon the distant Christians he exerted by his writing. About the year 47, we may believe, he wrote this Epistle in order to correct wrong practices and tendencies among the Jewish Christians. It was not written to Jews as Jews. The twelve tribes that are scattered abroad are not the twelve tribes of the old Israel; they are the spiritual men and women who, from James' point of view, constitute the real Israel. He can speak

of them as the real twelve tribes; and, therefore, he addresses them with regard to the evils that have begun to prevail among them. It is a time of trial and difficulty among them. Many of them are poor. Only here and there is there one who is rich. The poor are full of discontent, and the rich are overbearing, tyrannical, and proud. They presume upon their riches, they oppress their poor brethren. So easy it is to see that the early church was not immaculate. James looked abroad and recognized the fact that even the gospel of Christ had not made the Christians all they ought to be, and he tried to remedy these difficulties by writing to them an Epistle. All this takes place apparently before the Apostolic Council, for you notice there is not the slightest reference to the subsequent controversies with regard to justification by faith. Although James uses the word justification, there is no probability that he alluded to Paul; in fact, the Epistle of James was written before even Paul's first Epistle to the Thessalonians had seen the light.

The Epistle is not a doctrinal Epistle at all. It is a practical Epistle, written to correct practical evils. How does the apostle correct them? Why, he represents Christianity as the royal law, as the perfected law. The gospel, and God's new requisitions in Christ, are merely an expansion, an enlargement, an interpretation of the law of the Old Testament. It is the perfected law of liberty, and it is a law in which, if a man looks as into a mirror, he sees his own reflection; he sees the reflection of his own sin and his own needs; and he sees the way of salvation that has been provided by God through his Son. And so the whole substance

of this Epistle might be put into those few words, "Be not hearers of the law, but be doers also." In other words, the apostle was grieved at the fact there were so many that regarded their whole work as done when they had but merely an external faith in Christ, and he claims that mere faith in Christ that is intellectual and theoretical is of no value; that that is not the real faith of the gospel; that the real faith of the gospel is a faith that will make men faithful. The faith that saves is a faith that works by love and purifies the heart; and every other faith is a dead faith. Man is saved by a living faith, he is saved by a faith that will do something for him; he is saved by a faith that will bring him into connection with a living Christ, and so will lead to the purification of his life and heart. James is indignant with those who declare that they have the faith of Christ, and who yet are immoral or inconsistent in their practical lives. This is the whole substance of the Epistle. There is not much organized material, there is not much structure, as there is in the Epistle to the Hebrews. You cannot analyze it so easily as some other Epistles. It is a series of admonitions and precepts, directed to the practical life of the Christian church.

Luther had great difficulty with this Epistle of James. It was a stumbling-block to the great reformer to the very end of his days. He said some very hard things about it. He said, "The Epistle of James is a veritable epistle of straw." He counted it to be no apostolic writing. He said that it was destitute of the substance of the gospel. And why? Why, because he thought it inconsistent with Paul's doctrine of salva-

tion by faith. Ah, Luther was a great hero, and a great reformer, but he was a great deal narrower than Jesus Christ and his gospel. Luther did not understand James, and he would have done far better if he had suspended his judgment and waited for more light. The truth is, that profession of faith in Christ which makes a mere external idea of Christ the substance of the gospel is no better than heathenism. That profession of faith in Christ which regards Christianity itself as being nothing but an intellectual or historical belief, is no better than heathenism. Says James, a man is not justified by faith only; he is justified also by works. That seemed to Luther a very contradiction of the apostle Paul. The apostle Paul says we are justified by faith. James meant just the same thing as the apostle Paul, only James meant that a man is justified only by the faith that brings forth good works, and that any other faith is not faith at all. James' criticism, therefore, is not a criticism of the doctrine of justification, but of the nature of faith. James is criticizing the manner of faith that so many had who had professed faith, while they were destitute of the spirit of love and of self-sacrifice. Why, I tell you that such faith is dead; and, if a man tells me that he has faith and does not have any works at all, I say that he has not the true faith of the gospel—that is, not the faith that saves. The faith that saves is the faith that will do something for a man in making him over again, and making him obedient to the commands of Christ.

Paul and James seem at first sight to teach opposite doctrines, when Paul says that man is justified by

faith, and James says that man is justified by works. But there is no contrariety at all between them. Each of them is fighting a different man; they are striking out against different errors; they are not striking at each other. Dr. William M. Taylor has given us a useful illustration. A couple of men are surprised in a dark wood by a band of robbers; one says to the other: "Let us stand back to back; you strike out against the men on your side, and I will strike out against the men on my side." They are not striking against each other, but one is striking one foe and the other is striking another foe. So Paul is striking at the men that deny justification. James is striking at the men that deny faith. It is a different enemy that each one has in mind, and the two doctrines together are hemispheres that make up the whole globe of truth. It is a good deal, as the old illustration had it, like a man in a boat. If he rows with one oar alone he will go round and round, and make no progress at all; if he puts that oar down, takes up the other oar, and rows with that, then he will go round and round, only in a different direction. The only true way is to take both oars, and both oars at once. The gospel is the gospel of faith on the one hand, and of works on the other. We must use both oars if we ever are going to get into the kingdom.

The true gospel of Christ, therefore, is a gospel of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ, of salvation by faith alone; for it is only by trusting what the Lord has done that you can ever be saved; but that faith will necessarily bring you into such relation to Christ that you will be like Christ and will obey Christ.

Your faith will show itself in a holy life; and if there is no holy life, there is no true faith. Therefore Luther was narrow. He did not know the whole gospel, although he knew a part of it; and the lesson that is left to us is most important. We should lack one of the most important teachings of the New Testament if the Epistle of James were not ours. We should lack the great doctrine that those who have laid hold of Christ and have put faith in him must be sure also to maintain good works. We are saved by faith alone; but faith is never alone; it always brings good works in its train; it works by love, and purifies the heart.

THE EPISTLES OF PETER

The apostle Peter was the son of Jonas or John, two different versions of the same name. Peter was not, however, his original name. He was Simeon at first, or Simon, which is the same thing; and the name Peter was given him by Christ in anticipation. The Saviour says to him, "Thou *shalt be* called Peter"; but with an intimation that he has not yet the spirit which would make that designation a true one; and it is only two years afterward, at least, that Jesus says to him, "Thou *art* Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church."

Peter was a fisherman of Bethsaida: that is, Bethsaida was his native place, but at the time he was chosen by Christ he appears to have belonged to the city of Capernaum. There, during the greater part of the Gospel narrative, he had his home; and, like the sons of Zebedee, he pursued the trade of fishing for his livelihood.

Peter seems to have been brought to Christ first by Andrew, his brother. Christ's first call was on the banks of the Jordan, where Peter and Andrew, James and John seem to have gone, amid the multitude who were thronging to John the Baptist, to be baptized. After a slight sojourn with Christ, and having become acquainted with him, Peter, with his brother and with James and John, appears to have gone back to his trade once more and to have pursued it until Jesus met them by the side of the Lake of Galilee, called them to be his

permanent companions, and invested them with the responsibilities of apostleship.

From that time you find Peter continually with Jesus. He becomes one of our Lord's most intimate companions. He is one of those chosen disciples who constituted the innermost circle of the apostolic number. He is with the Saviour when Jesus raises Jairus' daughter from the dead. He is with Jesus upon the Mount of Transfiguration, and beholds his glory; he is with Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane, when the Saviour utters that memorable prayer and sweats those drops of blood. Jesus calls Peter to himself, because there is something in Peter which fits him for leadership. I imagine that each one of the disciples had his peculiar gift and qualifications for service. Judas, for example, was a practical administrator. Judas would have made an excellent manipulator and manager. He was treasurer, because there were certain business gifts which were his, more than they belonged to any other of the disciples. He had his opportunity. He had his chance to use what gifts he had for the service of the Lord.

And Peter had especially an openness and receptivity of heart, an ardent affection and power of recognizing Christ in his personal and divine mission, and then a zealous and enthusiastic activity, which fitted him, in some respects, to be the chief of the apostles. And yet, this ardent affection, this insight into the real person and work of Christ, this enthusiastic activity, were accompanied by a rashness and overconfidence which led Peter to his triple fall and triple denial of his Master, and were followed by the bitterest repentance.

Jesus looked upon Peter after that denial, and that look broke Peter's heart. He went out and wept bitterly. He repented. But he needed some special assurance of Jesus' forgiving love. After Jesus arose from the dead there was something very affecting in his words to the women, "Go and tell Peter." It was a special message to Peter that his heart might be comforted by the assurance of Christ's forgiving love. Is there not something very beautiful in this, that this denying Peter is made the mouthpiece of the Holy Spirit upon the day of Pentecost? Have we ever thought that our sins would prevent us evermore from being of service in the cause of Christ? Let us remember that it was that denying Peter who was made by Christ the means of bringing three thousand to the knowledge of the truth and of being the first communicator of the gospel to his Jewish countrymen. And it is not only true that Peter becomes the first preacher to the Jews, but he becomes the first preacher to the Gentiles also; for I suppose that is the meaning of the promise to Peter that the keys of the kingdom of heaven shall be given to him. Christ gave him the keys in this sense, that he was the first to unlock the door of the kingdom to the Jews, and he was the first also to unlock the door of the kingdom to the Gentiles. There were two great doors to be opened; Peter opened the first great door when at Pentecost he proclaimed salvation through the crucified One to the Jews who had put the Saviour to death; he opened the second great door when, going to Cornelius at Cæsarea, he proclaimed the gospel of Christ to the heathen, and opened the door of salvation to the Gentiles. In a

certain sense this denying Peter was given the first place in the kingdom of God; it was upon Peter that Christ built his church. "Thou art Peter; upon this rock I will build my church." The word "Peter" meant "rock."

But it is not upon Peter, as a person alone, that the church is founded, as the Roman Catholic Church imagines; but it is upon Peter as a confessor of Christ. It is upon Peter, as he has Christ in him. Peter can become a rock upon which the church is built, only as he becomes one with Christ, the great corner-stone. Peter can be the means of bringing others into the kingdom of God, only as he is a true confessor of Jesus Christ and a proclaimer of his gospel.

The Roman Catholic Church errs very greatly when she fancies that there is a sort of apostolic succession, and that, in an external way, through persons, there can be communicated the grace of God. No, it is not in any external way, or by any external means, that salvation comes down to man. It is through Peter as a confessor. It is through Peter as he has Christ in him; and, therefore, every one who is a confessor of Christ and is joined to Christ has the privilege of bringing in others also, and upon every true confessor of Christ the church is built. Protestants have sometimes erred in thinking it is simply the confession upon which the church is built; as if some external creed alone could be the means of bringing men to the kingdom of God. That is no more true than the Roman Catholic doctrine. You must have the person *and* his confession. You must have Peter *plus* the truth. The truth alone, as an abstract thing, will not bring men to

God; but the person *plus* the truth brings men to God. The "rock," therefore, is both confession and heart. It is personality *plus* the truth.

So Peter becomes the means of bringing in both Jews and Gentiles. At the Apostolic Council, when Paul comes to narrate what God has done for the Gentiles, Peter is one of the first to acquiesce in the decision which James has uttered and to sanction this opening of the door to the Gentiles without their becoming Jews. Afterward Peter was privately and individually unfaithful to this position which he took; for, at Antioch, he refused to associate with certain Gentile Christians, in order that he might gratify those who were prejudiced in favor of Jewish doctrine; but he was rebuked by Paul; and we do not find that this error of his continued at all; in fact, we do not find that he ever preached it. It was simply an instance of unfaithfulness in his private conduct to the truth which he had publicly proclaimed.

After having opened the door of the kingdom both to Jews and Gentiles, by the keys of faith and confession which Christ had committed to him, Peter appears to have less prominence in the apostolic history. Why? Because there was to be a transition from the Jews to the Gentiles. Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles *par excellence;* and, although we find Peter most prominent at the beginning of the Acts, in the latter part of the Acts we find that Paul occupies most of the room and attracts to himself most of the attention.

Tradition relates that Peter went to the East, that he preached to the Jews in Babylon. In fact, this First Epistle declares itself to have been written from

Babylon, and Babylon, I suppose, was not a mythical name for Rome, as some have supposed. It never assumed that mythical signification until after John had written his Apocalypse. At the time when this Epistle was written we have no reason to believe that the word "Babylon" was used for Rome. In an Epistle like this, in plain prose, we should hardly expect that the word Babylon would be used in that figurative, rhetorical, poetical sense.

There was a very large colony of Jews at Babylon; and Peter seems to have gravitated toward the East of the Roman Empire, as Paul gravitated toward the West. As the larger part of the Jews were in the East rather than in the West, the apostle to the Jews seems to have had the chosen sphere of his activity there, while Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, had his chosen sphere of activity westward, toward Rome, ever tending toward Rome, until at Rome he died. Some one will ask: Is it, therefore, entirely a mythical thing that Peter was crucified at Rome, that he was the founder of the Roman church, that he suffered martyrdom there by being crucified with his head downward? Well, with regard to that, the historians of the church are at variance to this very day. It certainly appears that Peter had not been at Rome at the time that Paul wrote his Epistle to the Romans. It would be almost inexplicable that there should be no mention of Peter if Peter had founded the Roman church. It would be impossible for Paul to have written the Epistle to the Romans without mentioning Peter, if Peter was there or had been there. We have no evidence in all the Epistles which Paul wrote during his imprisonment at

Rome that Peter was there in Rome or that he had ever preached there at all. I think, therefore, that the Epistle to the Romans is, in itself, a strong argument against the claims of the papacy, against the claim that the bishops of Rome derived their apostolic descent directly from Peter. It never can be proved that Peter was in Rome at all. If Peter ever was in Rome, it seems to me altogether probable that he was in Rome after Paul had suffered martyrdom, and that he went to Rome to take Paul's place and preach the gospel after Paul was taken away. But I think we shall have to leave the question in abeyance. With the light we now have it cannot be decided. All we know in regard to the First Epistle of Peter is that it was written from Babylon, the far east of the Roman Empire.

To whom was the First Epistle of Peter written? It appears to have been written to the churches that were founded by Paul. If you notice the address of the First Epistle you will see that it purports to come from Peter, "an apostle of our Lord Jesus Christ, to the elect sojourners of the Dispersion." By the Dispersion Peter meant the true Israel of God, those Christians who were scattered abroad. After the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities, the Jews were scattered among all the nations of the earth; they had synagogues in every large city of the Roman Empire; and there were multitudes of them throughout Asia Minor. As Jews were scattered about through the Roman Empire, and Christians constituted the true Israel, this word "Dispersion" came to be applied to the scattered Christians; and Peter writes his Epistle to the "elect sojourners of the Dispersion," that is, the Christians

that were dispersed throughout the whole of Asia Minor; then he proceeds to mention them in the order that would naturally occur to one writing from the East. He begins, for example, with Pontus, which was farthest to the east; then he mentions Galatia; then Cappadocia; and finally he mentions the two provinces that were farthest westward, namely, Asia, in the narrow sense, and Bithynia. So, in the very order of the provinces we have a new evidence that it was from Babylon, and not from Rome, that the Epistle was written. But all these churches of Asia Minor were churches that had directly or indirectly owed their foundation to the apostle Paul; and it was a sort of rule with the apostles not to invade the sphere of one another's labors. There was no place or church that had Epistles written to it, near the same time, by two of the apostles. Paul would not invade the sphere of another man's labors; he built on his own foundations; and just so, Peter would not invade Paul's sphere of labor, if the apostle Paul were still living.

These Epistles of Peter, therefore, could not have been written until after the death of the apostle Paul, or at least after Paul had withdrawn from active work. Possibly this First Epistle may have been written during Paul's first imprisonment, when he could not attend to the churches; but it is more likely that both the First and the Second Epistles were written after Paul's death. Peter then assumed the charge of the churches for which Paul had cared; and so, in a similar manner, the Epistles to the seven churches, which we find in the book of Revelation, were not written until after Paul had suffered martyrdom. The Epistles of Peter, then,

were written from the East, after the death of the apostle Paul; and as the apostle Paul suffered martyrdom in the year 64, or some part of the year 65, we certainly cannot put the date of the First Epistle of Peter earlier than the year 66. This is as near to the date of the two Epistles as any year that we can assign; and we find that Peter is striving to assist and encourage these churches of Asia Minor, after the great leader, the apostle to the Gentiles, has been taken away.

There are indications that much apostolic labor had preceded Peter's writing, and this labor Peter himself had not performed. He takes it for granted that these churches have already a complete system of Christian doctrine. He does not seek to indoctrinate them, but assumes that they already know the truth, and that they need only to have the truth brought vividly to their remembrance. The churches to which he writes are not only in possession of this complete system of doctrine, but they are now involved in persecution; not apparently persecution by the civil power, but persecution of a social sort from their Jewish countrymen, and from overweening and arrogant heathen. They need strengthening against this persecution from those who ought to help them in their Christian life. They also need instruction with regard to their conduct toward the heathen about them, lest evil example tempt them to impurity of life. And finally, there are tendencies to critical and censorious judgment among them, and their pastors and leaders are somewhat in danger of being infected by ambition and of lording it over God's people. These are the influences which Peter, in his First Epistle, tries to counteract.

There is something striking in the Epistles of Peter as to the style and method of address. Peter's Epistles show very strong traces of the influence of the apostle Paul. In that respect too, we have an evidence that the apostle Peter wrote after the apostle Paul. Peter was one of those open-hearted souls that receive from every hand. He had insensibly taken in many of the ideas of the apostle Paul, and not only the ideas of Paul, but some of Paul's methods of expression. Peter had seen writings of the apostle Paul before he himself wrote; in fact, in the Second Epistle, he says of Paul's Epistles that in them "there are many things hard to be understood, which those who are unstable wrest to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures."

Is it not a sign of the nobility of this apostle that, with all his prestige and influence, he should declare his approval and give his sanction to the writings of the apostle Paul; that he should recognize them as Scripture like the Old Testament (for, when he speaks of "other Scriptures," it is the Old Testament, unquestionably, of which he speaks); that he should assign to them an equal authority with the writings of the prophets, and say that the things in them which are difficult to be understood are worthy of all respect, as if they were the very utterances of Christ himself? How devoid of jealousy, how generous, how magnanimous, how full of the spirit of love and self-sacrifice! How well he has subdued all private feeling to the interest of Christ! There is something very noble in all this. But it is not surprising. Paul, a long time before, had put the Christian truth into correct form, and in this respect was the greatest of the apostles. Only

James had preceded Paul, and the Epistle of James had no such currency as had the writings of the apostle Paul, being destined for a narrow circle of Jews, while Paul's were sent abroad to all the Gentile churches and were spread quickly through the world. It is not surprising that Peter should have been greatly influenced by Paul's doctrine and by Paul's method of expression.

If you will take the First Epistle of Peter and read the opening of it, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," you will see that there is something to remind you very vividly of Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians. Peter unquestionably had in his hands the writings of Paul; he had studied them carefully and had been influenced by them. In Peter's First Epistle we find Silvanus, or Silas, mentioned, and Mark also, two of Paul's principal helpers. Here is a link of connection between Peter and Paul. We can trace the history of Silas and the history of Mark down to the close of Paul's life. After Paul's martyrdom it would seem that these friends and companions of his made their way to the East to the apostle Peter; that they brought with them the letters which Paul had written to the various churches; that Peter made them a subject of study; and that Peter then wrote to the churches that were now orphans by the apostle's death, expressed his sanction of all that Paul had written, and then added his own instructions for their present condition and needs.

When we come to the Second Epistle of Peter we find that it is written to practically the same persons or communities, because, in the third chapter and first verse, Peter says, "This second epistle I write unto

you, brethren." But this Second Epistle has a slightly different object from the first. The dangers and difficulties counteracted in the second are internal, whereas those in the first are external. As, in the first, it was the heathen with whom the people of God had to deal and who persecuted them, so, in the Second Epistle, it seems to be the false teachers within the church. Licentious professors of religion, and profane scoffers, seem to be within the body. Trouble had already arisen, and the object of the Second Epistle is to counteract these internal difficulties; whereas the object of the First Epistle is to strengthen and comfort and encourage the churches in their endurance of persecutions from without.

This Second Epistle of Peter is the Epistle of all the New Testament with regard to whose genuineness there has been most dispute. Many people who are convinced of the authenticity and genuineness of all the other books of the New Testament, declare that with regard to this Second Epistle of Peter they are in great doubt; and it is well for us to understand the exact state of the case. The fact seems to be that it is not until the year 230, almost two centuries after the Saviour's death, that we have an express mention of this Second Epistle of Peter. This first mention of the Epistle is by Origen, the church Father, and he mentions it in a very peculiar way. He says: "We have one Epistle of Peter which is universally accepted; and, if you will, a second, for this is questioned." While he mentions the Second Epistle of Peter as being in existence, he says that it is questionable whether it is a genuine work of the apostle.

It is not until the year 250 that we have the first clear witness to the Second Epistle of Peter, with an acceptance of the Epistle; this is by Firmilian, a bishop of Cappadocia. The church historians mention it among the Antilegomena, the books that are spoken against. Jerome, in the fourth century, investigated the claims of the Epistle and admitted it to the Latin Vulgate, while, at the same time, he recorded the objections against it.

It was not until the year 372 that the Council of Laodicea formally admitted it to the canon. But that was a council held in the East; and it was not until the year 397, almost four hundred years after Christ, that the Council of Carthage, in the West, admitted it formally to the canon. The history of this Epistle is manifestly quite different from that of any other New Testament document.

How can we account for all this strange lateness in getting into circulation and acceptance in the Christian church? Is all this consistent with the genuineness and the inspiration of the Epistle? I think it is; and I venture an explanation, though my explanation can be only a plausible hypothesis. These Epistles were certainly written very late in the apostle's life. Peter must have been a somewhat old man in the year 66, when we say the Epistle was probably written. How old was Peter at the time of the Saviour's death? We should think, should we not, that the apostle Peter was older than our Lord? Then, in the year 66, he was thirty-three years older than when Jesus died. He must have been sixty-six, if he was born at the same time with Christ; but if older than Christ, then he

must have been, say, seventy-six or possibly eighty. We think of him as much older than the apostle John; and in the Second Epistle we see the marks of age; he is getting toward his end; he says the time of his departure is at hand; he wishes to leave his remembrance to the church, and to give them something that will instruct them and comfort them and encourage them after he is gone. These are the words of an old man. These two Epistles seem to be written in the old age of the apostle, and just before his death.

And how did he die? Why, tradition says that he suffered martyrdom. This is an indication of persecution, and the persecution would have been persecution not simply of himself, but persecution of other Christians also. An Epistle written just before his martyrdom, and just before a general persecution of the church, would certainly find some difficulties in the way of its rapid dissemination. Persecution might require it to be hidden for a time. Years may have passed before it safely could be brought out from its obscurity. I think we can easily see that there may have been reasons why this Epistle should have come later into general circulation than any of the other Epistles of the New Testament. Written far away at the East, with no daily mails, no express-trains, no post-office, no press, it had to be transcribed word by word, a single copy at a time. It took long to circulate the documents of the New Testament through the Christian church. To make an Epistle written in Babylon fully known in western Rome may have required a whole generation, and intervening persecution may have prevented the multiplication of copies for a century.

There are some curious analogies in modern times which may throw light upon this matter. Some have questioned whether it was possible that Epistles, hidden so long, could have come out to the light at last and then be accepted by the whole Christian church. But De Wette found, not seventy-five years ago, a number of important letters by Luther, the great reformer, that the world had never seen before. Three hundred years had passed since Luther's death. De Wette brought out these letters and printed them. They were accepted at once as veritable letters of the reformer, although they had been hidden for three hundred years.

John Milton wrote a treatise on Christian doctrine—an important work—but it was two hundred years after John Milton's death before the world knew of its existence; then only was it printed and circulated. Sir William Hamilton tells us that there are now actually in existence important treatises by great philosophers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that are lying hidden away, and unknown, not only to the world but even to the chosen biographers of these philosophers. Or if one desires an illustration from ancient times, we have it in the case of the later works of Aristotle. These works were lost for a hundred and fifty years after his death, but they were recognized as genuine so soon as they were recovered from the cellar of the family of Neleus in Asia. So I think it not without parallel or analogy that this Epistle of the apostle Peter should have remained hidden for many years, should have been then brought out, and finally, through many difficulties, should have won its way to the confidence of the Christian church.

Our evidence of the genuineness and value of the Epistle is in part external. But there is an internal evidence just as valuable as the external. By internal evidence I mean the spiritual value of the Epistle itself, the appeal that it makes to our Christian sympathies and affections, and the power it has to stir and arouse and warn. There is a spirit in the sacred writings which is very different from that of secular literature. Take the first chapter of the Second Epistle of Peter and read it through; if you are a Christian, you will feel that the Holy Spirit appeals to you through that first chapter as clearly and indubitably as it appeals to you through any other chapter of the New Testament. There is a power here, an elevation, an illumination, that are manifestly the work of the Spirit of God; and I confess that, for my part, I should greatly feel the loss of the Second Epistle of Peter, if it should be taken from us. I do not think the question whether the Second Epistle of Peter is genuine or not is one upon which the whole New Testament stands or falls. Still I think there was a divine will guiding the formation of the canon, and that the church was inspired as to which portions of the ancient writings to accept. I believe most firmly in the inspiration and genuineness of this Second Epistle of Peter, but I believe it not so much upon the external evidence as I believe it upon the internal evidence, the power it has to touch my heart and speak to me as by the very voice of the Holy Spirit.

It has been said that the apostle Paul is the apostle of faith, that the apostle John is the apostle of love, and that the apostle Peter is the apostle of hope. Let us read these Epistles in the light of that general remark.

Hopefulness is the most characteristic thing about them. You cannot read these two Epistles without feeling something of their broad and noble hopefulness.

Peter was a man of sanguine temperament; a man who found it easy to believe; and a man who, as he believed most heartily in the facts of Christianity, had a most unwavering faith in the triumph of Christianity. Read the first chapter of the First Epistle of Peter in the light of this remark. You will notice that Peter based his hopes on historical facts. He takes us back to the suffering and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ; then he takes us forward to the future, and the certainty that the Lord Jesus Christ will come again. One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. So he bids us to be pure, even in the midst of darkness and persecution, for the day of the Lord draweth nigh.

You remember that Jesus told Peter to strengthen his brethren. Obedience to that command led to the writing of these First and Second Epistles. Peter would strengthen his brethren, to undergo the trials and persecutions with which they are beset here in this present life, with the assurance that there is laid up for them a crown of glory, incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away. There is a spirit of cheer, there is a spirit of brightness, a spirit of hope in the Epistles of Peter, which differences them from all the other Epistles of the New Testament. Peter's own soul is full of hope and brightness and cheer, and he expresses that innermost nature of his in both the First and the Second Epistles.

THE EPISTLES OF JOHN

The First Epistle of John can hardly be distinguished from a doctrinal and practical treatise. There is no address to it. There are no salutations at the end of it. No author's name is connected with it. One might almost think it was intended as a general exposition of Christian truth; and yet you find, here and there through the work, expressions like this, "I write unto you, little children," which seem to indicate that, in the author's mind, it was an Epistle. Although we do not know the names of the churches to which it was first sent, it is quite possible that it was sent to them by some messenger who assured them of its authorship; so that the name John did not need to be appended to it or mentioned at its beginning. This, in fact, is characteristic of all John's writing. It is always anonymous.

The two other Epistles of John do not mention the author's name. He calls himself "the elder" in them. That word "elder" may not mean "officer of the church," but may be used simply in the sense of "an elderly person," as Paul called himself "Paul, the aged." And in the Gospel, you remember that there is no mention at all of John's name. The "disciple whom Jesus loved" is the nearest he comes to it; so that, although this is an Epistle of John, it is not necessary at all that we should connect our faith in its genuineness with any ability on our part to show the

apostle's name connected with it, either in the Epistle itself, or traditionally, when it was first delivered.

The characteristics of the Epistle are the characteristics of John's other writings. There are so many common features of the Gospel, of these three Epistles, and of the Apocalypse, the style of thought in them all is so peculiar, so unlike that of any other of the New Testament writings, that the simplest and easiest hypothesis is that all are the work of the apostle John. Any other hypothesis at once meets with so many difficulties, so many contradictions, that we have to give it up. The universal voice of the tradition of the church ascribes this First Epistle to John; and I think we need pay very little attention to the skeptical objections of some modern critics, for they evidently originate in a carping spirit that no evidence whatever would satisfy. The Gospel according to John is the first of the two main writings, and this Epistle is the second; in other words, the Gospel was written before the Epistle. I do not mean to say that the Gospel is the earliest of John's writings, because the Apocalypse, I believe, is the earliest. The Apocalypse, or book of Revelation, was written thirty years before the Gospel; while the Epistle was written in the very latest period of the apostle's life. I doubt whether we can put the date of it earlier than the year 96 or 97, at the very close of the first century, long after Paul and Peter had suffered martyrdom, and long after the other books of the New Testament had been written. Quite an interval appears between the writings we have studied heretofore, all of which were written before the destruction of Jerusalem, and the Gospel of John

with the Epistle which immediately follows it. The relation of the Epistle to the Gospel is an interesting one. In both of them the great subject is Christ, the everlasting Word of the Father, the revelation of God to man. And yet the aspect in which Christ is regarded is different in the Gospel from that in which he is regarded in the Epistle. The Epistle seems to be an application of the truth that is laid down in the Gospel. In the Gospel, John is a historian; in the Epistle, John is a theologian. Or, if you choose to put it another way, in the Gospel John gives us the historical basis. He represents Christ as coming from God, becoming incarnate in humanity, and living his life before us. Thus he lays the foundation of the Gospel in historical fact. Humanity is incorporated and absolutelly united with the Deity, but it is in the person of Christ; the union of Christ's followers with God is an incident and consequence, but not the main thing that is treated.

This union of Christ's followers with God is the subject of the Epistle. In the Epistle we have the result of the union of deity with humanity, in the life of the church. As the Gospel shows us God incarnated in Christ, the starting-point, so, in the Epistle, we have humanity brought into fellowship with God by union with Christ. As the Gospel sets before us God in Christ, so the Epistle sets before us the church in Christ. In the Gospel we have the great doctrinal fact set before us; in the Epistle we have the ethical consequence of that fact. In the Gospel we have God in Christ; in the Epistle we have Christ in the church. So it is very natural that the Epistle should follow the

Gospel, follow it at no great interval, follow it as a commentary follows a text, follow it as the application ordinarily follows the doctrinal part of a sermon.

Written in the year 96 or 97, therefore, immediately after the Gospel, we find in it no reference to the controversies which had agitated the church in the days of Paul. They all seem to have been settled—that great Judaizing controversy, for example; that question between law and gospel; that dividing line between merely outward Israel and the true church of God—nothing of this appears in either the Gospel or the Epistle of John. Paul has long since passed away. Thirty years have passed since his martyrdom, and John has been called to supervise the churches over which Paul was once the bishop or supervisor. Asia Minor has been for many years the scene of the apostle's labors, and a great many of the early difficulties of the situation have ceased to exist. Jerusalem has been destroyed, so long destroyed that there is not the least mention of Jerusalem in this Epistle of John.

Not only has Jerusalem been destroyed, but the persecutions that circled about that time have all passed by. There is not the least hint in the First Epistle of John that there was any such thing as persecution. The difficulties which John has to meet, the errors which he has to controvert, are not those which arise from external opposition of enemies to the faith. The heathen are not mentioned at all in this First Epistle of John.

The church seems not only to have been launched, but to have proceeded for a long time on a prosperous voyage. No external rocks or quicksands occasion the

warnings of the apostle; the difficulties are all internal; such difficulties as would arise in a church that had been prosperous, and which, by virtue of its prosperity, was in danger of forgetting its early love. And so the apostle is enabled to confine himself to those great internal truths and needs which are the same for all time.

It is remarkable how completely John lifts himself up above everything merely temporal, above everything that has reference to the present, and how he strikes at tendencies that are the same from age to age; if you find in his Epistles any reference to errors peculiar to his time, they are errors of a totally different sort from those with which Paul had to deal.

There is one great doctrinal tendency, one great tendency of error, which John, in this Epistle, combats. It has to do with the person of Christ. At the close of the first century there began to manifest itself in the Christian church a disposition to degrade Christ, on the one hand, to the mere level of man, and to hold him to be a mere exalted human being; and, on the other hand, a disposition to regard him as so completely and entirely God that he could not suffer here in the flesh. This latter tendency is represented in the person of Cerinthus. The Christian Fathers tell us that Cerinthus lived in the days of the apostle John, and was in Ephesus at the close of the first century.

What was the doctrine of this Cerinthus? It was this, that Deity and humanity were not from the first indissolubly united in Christ; the union was a temporary one, and a separable one. In other words, Cerinthus did not believe in a miraculous conception; did

not believe in a genuine incarnation of God in humanity; did not believe that he who was born of the Virgin was the Son of God as well as the Son of man, divine as well as human. No, Cerinthus held that Jesus was born just as other men are born; that he was a holy man; that he was the choice of God; that, at his baptism, there descended upon him from on high, in the form of a dove, a divinity that took possession of him, and that constituted a union with him that lasted through his earthly life until the time of his crucifixion; and that then he was forsaken by the Father; the death that occurred was not the death of Deity *plus* humanity, but was the death simply of a human being; all the miraculous works that Christ had previously done were done by virtue of the Deity that dwelt in him and by no power of his own; Deity did not unite itself to him in such a way that his humanity could not be separated from it; and so, Christ went up on high, the human was left here below, and only the Deity went back to the throne. How plain it is that such an incarnation does not answer either to the Scripture representation, or to the needs of our human hearts! It is very like the incarnation that we find in Buddhism, where Buddha comes down in a cycle of ages, joins himself temporarily to a human being, inhabits this humanity for a little time, and then, after he has done this temporary work, shuffles off the humanity like a worn-out garment, and returns alone to his heaven.

How different from the conception of the incarnation in Scripture! In Scripture God unites himself from the very birth of Christ, and forevermore. We

call our Lord the God-man. From the very beginning he is the Son of God. The union in him of humanity and deity is indissoluble. When Christ ascends up on high he takes our humanity with him; so that in heaven to-day he has the same hands and feet that were nailed to the bitter cross for us. That is the incarnation, that is the union of humanity and deity for which our human hearts long. We want a union of humanity with God that is permanent; and only that complete union of humanity with God satisfies our needs or furnishes the basis of our fellowship with God. Cerinthus denies this; Cerinthus declares that the union of deity with humanity began only at Christ's baptism and continued only until the time of his death; Christ now is not our elder brother in the sense that he is man as well as God; he cannot sympathize with us now, because he has not the same nature that he had when he was here upon earth. This doctrine is so repugnant to Christian feeling, it is so antagonistic to Scripture that John regards it as the very central heresy of all; and he makes belief in the real union of Deity and humanity in Christ, belief in the permanent union of the Son of God with human nature, a test of all Christian fellowship. There is a tradition with regard to the apostle John that when, on a certain day, he found himself in the public bath with Cerinthus, or heard, as he was in the bath, that this heretic Cerinthus was there too, he seized his single garment and rushed out from the bath in terror, declaring to those about him that he dare not stay under that roof lest the roof should fall upon them as a sign of God's judgment upon such a heretic. There was a revelation of the

burning love and burning hate that characterized the apostle John.

We sometimes think of him as effeminate. We must remember that he was a Boanerges, a "Son of Thunder." That same deep heart of love was inseparable from a heart of hatred for everything that was untrue and impure. The love of goodness that is not accompanied by a hatred of evil is love of a very suspicious sort.

The apostle John has given us, in this First Epistle, a commentary, application, and continuation of the Gospel. He has told us, in this First Epistle, what effect this fellowship with God produces in the heart and life of the believer.

You remember the striking similarity between the beginning of the Gospel and the beginning of the Epistle. In the Gospel we have: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God"; and then, in the fourteenth verse, we have: "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us (and we behold his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father) full of grace and truth." In the Epistle we find the apostle stirred by the completed incarnation, and speaking of what he himself, as an eye-witness, has beheld: "That which our eyes have seen, which our hands have handled, of the Word of life, that declare we unto you"; and the object of his declaration is that those who believe in Christ may have their joy fulfilled.

As, in the Gospel, he begins with eternity past, shows how the Word of God became incarnate, and then describes the life of God among men, so, in the

Epistle, he begins with the complete incarnation, tells us how he himself, among others, had been an eye-witness of the facts of the Saviour's life, and then proceeds to show what effect this great doctrine ought to have upon the life of the believer and of the church.

After this beginning of the First Epistle there are two great divisions of the treatment, the first of them extending to the twelfth verse of the second chapter, and the second extending from that point to the end.

It is difficult to follow the course of thought of the Epistle, and to construct an analysis of it. The apostle, while having the general plan which he is to follow, yet allows himself from time to time to diverge from the path that he has marked out, in order to make particular applications of the truth and to add suggestions that occur to his mind. Exactly where the lines of division are to be drawn it is sometimes difficult to say. The first verse seems to suggest another verse, and the second verse to suggest the third; yet, after all, there can be no doubt that there is a general progress of thought, and that two great ideas are presented in it. If we can fasten in our minds these two ideas of the Epistle, it will be of service to us.

The first is: God is light, walk in the light; and the second is: God is love, walk in love. The first part of the Epistle has to do with God as light; that is, as moral light, as having in him no darkness at all of sin or impurity, and therefore as excluding sin on the part of the Christian, so that he who lives in fellowship with God is bound to walk in the light, as God is light. And if the Christian has come into fellowship with God, that light will reveal the Christian's

remaining unholiness, and will show that the Christian is necessarily one who recognizes sin and confesses sin. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If any man says he has no sin, he is a liar, the truth is not in him"; God's moral light reveals the remaining impurity of those who are joined to him; reveals it to themselves; leads them, by his Spirit, to confess that remaining impurity; leads them to seek forgiveness for it and deliverance from it. That is the first great division of the Epistle. Fellowship with God, brought about by union with Jesus Christ, is the one great subject of the Epistle. And the application is obvious. As God is light, let us walk in the light, confess our sin, put away our sin, seek the deliverance from sin which the Spirit of God provides in Christ.

The second part of the Epistle very naturally follows. God is not only moral light, holiness, purity, but he is also love; and fellowship with God in Jesus Christ will, therefore, necessarily lead us first to love God, and then, as the result of that love, to love our brethren also; so that the evidence that we have this love to God will be seen in our love for the brethren, and wherever love for the brethren prevails, it will have its source in God himself, who is love. So we are brought to a recognition of the fact that there should be two sorts of self-sacrifice and service on the part of Christians, one toward one another, and the other toward their Lord. Beginning with the fact of God's great love to us, John saw the necessity on our part of corresponding love toward one another.

"Herein is love," or, in the original, "herein is the Love," as if this love of God in Christ were the one great example of love; as if this were the love which included all other love; the love into fellowship with which we were to enter. In other words, the love of God toward the lost world in Christ is love of which we are not only the objects, but also the partakers. Did he not lay down his life for us? If he laid down his life for us, then we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. That is a very simple sort of argument. It is not dialectic. It is not conceived or expressed in the logical way of the apostle Paul. John speaks in a childlike way; he speaks from insight; he puts his thought in the simplest possible form; yet his utterance is wonderfully profound and wonderfully true. This is the very truth we need to make us active and useful Christians.

Here, then, we have the great subject of the Epistle, fellowship with God in union with Christ. God is light: therefore enter into this fellowship of moral light, confess and put away sin. God is love: enter into this fellowship of love; not only receive this love from God, but manifest this love to your brethren; for, when a man says he loves God and loves not his brother, he is a liar, like that man who says that he has no sin which he needs to confess and put away.

We have seen that John's first aim in this Epistle is to oppose a great doctrinal error with regard to the person of Christ, that doctrinal error which would separate between the humanity and Deity of Christ, and conceive of them as dislocated and only temporarily united during the Saviour's life; that great error

that denies that Jesus Christ is from the beginning and forever the divine-human Redeemer, Son of God and Son of man. John's second great aim is to combat the great practical error that a man, when he is once redeemed, does not need any further redemption. These prosperous Christians were in danger of forgetting that there was still remaining something to be done, and that they must look to God to sanctify them as well as justify them. It is not enough to be forgiven. Those who say, "God has forgiven me; it is all right with me; I have nothing now to do," must take care to live a life of good works, a life of holiness, a life of love, or they will prove that they are strangers to the grace of God. The practical instruction of the Epistle, then, aims to convince Christians that they must continually seek sanctification, that they must be faithful to Christ in purity of life and in love toward the brethren. A little remark of Luther's is exceedingly apt, and is worth remembering. He says, "He that *is* a Christian is *no* Christian"; that is, he who thinks that his Christian life is a complete thing, that he needs nothing more, that there is nothing to strive for, nothing further to do, nothing further to attain, why, he is not a Christian at all. How much there is in that! He who *is* a Christian, trusts Christian experiences in the past, without trying continually to be a better Christian and to live more near to God, why, that man shows that the root of the matter is not in him. He is not a Christian, for a Christian is one who recognizes his remaining depravity, hates it, longs to be rid of it, and strives continually to be more and more like Christ his Lord.

There is a saying of Jesus himself, of which I think this is only an exposition in another form of words. Jesus bids his disciples love one another and sacrifice themselves for one another; and he says, "So shall ye become my disciples." Become? Why, they were his disciples. Yes, they were his disciples, but they could become more and more his disciples. "So shall ye become my disciples." It is not enough that we are Christians now; there is a sense in which we are to become more and more thoroughly Christians in our daily life. This is exactly what the apostle John seeks. He writes this Epistle in order that those whom he recognizes as already saved by the grace of God may be more and more saved. They may be saved more and more from the evil that is within and without, and they may become more and more like Christ in heart and life.

There are two specific objects which the apostle mentions in addition to this one. He says he writes these things to them that their joy may be fulfilled—that is one thing he aims at; and that they may know that they have eternal life—that is the other aim. There is a knowledge of the fact that they belong to Christ and that they are his, on the one hand; and there is a joy resulting, on the other. These two have an intimate connection with each other. John writes in order that our faith may be turned into assurance; in order that our trust in Christ may become a real conviction. He would have us know that Christ is ours, and that we are his; and so would put us in possession of our proper Christian joy. The Lord is not content that we should be simply Christians; he wants

us to *know* that we are Christians and to have the *joy* of knowing it; so that the joy of the Lord may be our strength.

It is not possible for a Christian who is living in Doubting Castle, and who is constantly troubled with fears lest he shall be a castaway, to do so much for God or to exert so large or so blessed an influence upon those around him as he could exert if he had the assurance that he was a child of God and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. The joy of the Lord is a contagious joy; when it shines out from the features it gives witness to the world of a higher life in Christ; it leads others to seek and to find the Christ who imparts it. John writes with these two ends in view: First, that we may know we are Christians; and secondly, that we may have the joy that belongs to Christians. This Epistle, written in his age, and just before his death, is his legacy to the Christian church.

There is something very striking in the point to which we have arrived in our study of the New Testament. This is the last of the New Testament documents, the last word of inspiration, and how calm, how authoritative, how apostolic it is!

A single word with regard to the Second and Third Epistles. The second is apparently written to a lady, an elect lady, who has a Christian household which is threatened by the invasion of false teachers, and she is warned against them. It is a beautiful illustration of family religion in the apostolic age. The Third Epistle is written to Gaius; and in that Epistle Gaius is warned not to yield to the false instructions of a certain Diotrephes, who seems to be a pastor or elder

of the church who has refused to obey the commands of the apostle and to entertain certain evangelists whom he had sent to minister in that neighborhood. This Third Epistle furnishes evidence of church organization in the apostolic age. In the First Epistle we have no mention of church organization, and no mention of religion in the family. The Second and Third Epistles supplement the First, and show us that both existed, although in the First Epistle we have no allusion to them. So the three together constitute a complete whole, and round out the whole work of apostolic instruction which John the apostle was sent to perform. Like the Lord who sent him, he could say that he had finished the work which God gave him to do.

THE EPISTLE OF JUDE

JUDE or Judas, as our new version makes his name, declares himself to be the brother of James; and by that very fact he seems to intimate that he has no independent standing as an apostle. If Jude had been an apostle, it would seem as if he would have so announced himself in the address of his Epistle, and have gained whatever of authority such an announcement might give. On the other hand, he seems to distinguish himself from the apostles when he urges those to whom he writes to remember the words that were spoken to them by the apostles of our Lord, while Peter says: "Remember the words that were spoken unto you by *us,* the apostles of the Lord." Jude does not class himself among the apostles. He calls himself simply Jude, the brother of James.

This James cannot be James the greater. John, so far as we know, is his only brother. This James must have been the James who wrote the Epistle; and this James was not an apostle at all, but was a brother of our Lord, a later son of the Virgin, half-brother, so to speak, of Jesus, one of those who up to the time of the Saviour's resurrection had remained unbelieving. For that reason he could not be chosen as an apostle, for an apostle needed to be one who had been an eyewitness of the wonderful works of Jesus from the beginning; and the brethren of Jesus, who did not constantly accompany him during his earthly life, but

rather sundered themselves from him, were not witnesses of all the events of that life, and therefore were not so fit persons to be entrusted with the apostolate.

Jude, like James, then, was one of those half-brothers of Jesus who, though unbelieving during most of our Saviour's life here upon the earth, were converted after the resurrection. Jesus appeared to James in the fulness of a brother's love, convinced him of his error, and brought him to repentance and faith. We do not know that there was any special appearance of the risen Lord to Jude. He may have been one of those five hundred brethren to whom our Lord revealed himself all "at once." At any rate, he became a convert after Jesus' resurrection; and we find him with the other brethren of our Lord, and with the women, and with the apostles, in that upper chamber, where they prayed for the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the day of Pentecost.

We know very little with regard to the life of Jude. It is told us that two of his grandsons were apprehended by Domitian; and being brought before him, were accused of being related to Jesus, the Christ; but when Domitian, the emperor, saw that they were plain men, and, on questioning them, found that the kingdom which they intended to set up was not a temporal but purely a spiritual kingdom, it is said that he dismissed them, and stayed the persecution that had begun.

What became of Jude himself we hardly know. Tradition relates that he preached to the Jews in Palestine and in Egypt; and if we are asked to say to

what particular portion of the Christian church this letter of Jude was addressed, we may say that it was probably addressed to Jewish Christians in Palestine and in Egypt, for in those countries we find the first recognition of the Epistle. It would almost seem as if Peter and Jude had consented together with regard to the portions of the Christian church which they would address—Peter writing to the Jewish Christians of the Dispersion in Asia Minor, while Jude wrote to the Jewish Christians in Palestine and Egypt. The date of the Epistle must have been in the very latest period of the Apostolic age—that is, just before the destruction of Jerusalem—for Jude speaks as if the apostolic preaching were a thing of the past; "Remember the words that were spoken to you by the apostles," he says, as if some of the apostles had already fallen asleep, and their ministry had come to its close.

And yet, while the Epistle of Jude must have been written very late, it cannot have been written *after* the destruction of Jerusalem, because there are certain evidences that Peter had read this Epistle and had received some special influence from it. It therefore must have been written some time before Peter's death; and, moreover, there is no reference whatever in it to the destruction of Jerusalem, as there most certainly would have been if Jerusalem had been destroyed.

The Epistle reminds its readers of the various warnings and judgments of God; if Jerusalem had recently fallen, Jude would certainly have mentioned it as the most striking evidence that God's justice, although long delayed, will certainly be executed. We must, therefore, put the date of the Epistle somewhere about the

years 64 to 66. Peter suffered martyrdom probably in 68. We must put the date of the Epistle a few years before that. And it is before the destruction of Jerusalem, which took place in the year 70. Yet it is at the very close of the Apostolic age, after many of the apostles had ceased to labor, so that this date 64 to 66 is as probable a date as any that can be assigned.

There is a striking resemblance between the Epistle of Jude and the second chapter of the Second Epistle of Peter. Students of the New Testament have marked this resemblance, and have been puzzled by it. The writers of these two Epistles must have been in communication with each other; one of these two had read the work of the other, had been strongly influenced by it, and had actually taken from it some of its thoughts and expressions.

The question as to priority is interesting. Who was the original, and who was the transcriber? It appears that Jude was the original; for there is a certain terseness, vigor, and coherence about the Epistle of Jude which marks it as an original. No one can read the Epistle of Jude without feeling that it is a unit, that it is the work of one man.

On the other hand, when you read the Second Epistle of Peter, you find that the second chapter of Peter is not in Peter's ordinary style; that there are expressions which are diverse from Peter's manner; and, when you compare those divergent expressions with the Epistle of Jude, you find that, in the Epistle of Jude, some of them are there, almost word for word. I do not mean to say that the whole Epistle of Jude has been transcribed by Peter; but the general course of Jude's

thought is adopted by Peter, and many of the forms of expression are adopted also.

There is another reason why we should be led to think that Peter was the transcriber and not Jude, viz.: That the Epistle of Peter is the longer, and the Epistle of Jude is the briefer. It is the big fish that eat up the little fish, and not *vice versa*. It was easier for Peter to take Jude and to incorporate what Jude had written than it was for Jude to take a piece out of Peter, and make his whole Epistle out of that.

You find, moreover, that the striking expressions of Jude are often curtailed. Peter takes them in condensed form. Peter puts them in his own way. When he came to things in Jude which were difficult to understand, expressions that were very uncommon, he simply omitted them, and contented himself with taking the substance of Jude's thought. I explain this curious phenomenon, just as I explain the taking from the Old Testament by the New Testament writers of manifold quotations, without any allusion whatever to the place from which they were taken. You do not blame Paul as he writes the Epistle to the Romans, and, in the second chapter, quotes verse after verse from the Old Testament Scriptures, without any allusion to the parts of the Old Testament Scripture from which they are taken. The inspiring Spirit who directed the mind of Paul had a perfect right to lead Paul's mind to the acceptance and reiteration of truth that, under the influence of that same Spirit, had been spoken before.

Here were Jude and Peter writing to Jewish Christians, and yet writing to Jewish Christians in different regions—Peter writing to Jewish Christians in Asia

Minor, Jude writing to Jewish Christians in Palestine and Egypt. It is possible that there was not only communication, but also consultation, between them. Jude may even have had Peter for an amanuensis, and Peter may have taken from Jude's dictation what suited his purpose, may have incorporated it in his own Epistle, and then may have sent it out to Jewish Christians in another part of the earth. In the Old Testament we have a similar appropriation in Micah of a prophecy previously uttered by Isaiah. I see no reason why such a theory as this should not be perfectly consistent with our idea of inspiration. The real author of the Scripture is not Jude, nor Peter, but the Spirit of God; and the Spirit of God has a right to repeat his utterances by whomsoever he will.

The design of the Epistle of Jude is to oppose what we may call antinomian Gnosticism. By Gnosticism I mean the pretense that religion consists mainly in speculative belief, and the corresponding tendency to make mere outward profession the essential thing. Gnosticism claims, moreover, that those who have professed Christianity and are outwardly connected with the church are in no danger of sin and may do what they will. There was the real spirit of licentiousness and the tendency to all manner of sensuality, while at the same time there was an utter disregard of the appointed authorities of the Christian church. The design of the Epistle is to oppose these tendencies, which we find treated in other Epistles of the New Testament, and which seem to have been particularly rife in the churches to which Peter and Jude wrote.

Jude treats his subject in a very orderly way. After

the introduction, in which he speaks of Christians as the peculiar possession of the Lord Jesus Christ, sanctified by God, the Father, and kept for our Lord up to the time of his coming, he urges them to contend earnestly for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. Notice the peculiar form of statement. This faith is something that can be separated from all the vagaries and speculations of men. It is a well-known and an easily recognized doctrine of Christ. It is given once for all; it is not to be altered, or added to, or superseded; it is given to all the saints as their common property and possession. It is not an esoteric doctrine, as the false teachers claimed. These false teachers prided themselves upon knowledge that is the possession of the few. They fancied that they alone had the key to the truth, and they excluded from the inner circle of intimacy with God the great mass of the Christian membership. They were self-sufficient and arrogant.

The Epistle sets over against all this narrow pretense of a peculiar doctrine the one faith delivered once for all to all the saints, as the common property and possession of all who love our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. The church is to contend constantly for this faith against the false teachers who set up something beyond the common truth that belongs to the Christian church.

In the second part of his Epistle Jude speaks of the punishment that comes to those who resist the truth and are unfaithful to the word of God. Three sorts of sin are spoken of as punishable and three illustrations are given of their punishment. There is, first, the sin

of unbelief. God brought Israel out of Egypt, and yet, when Israel disbelieved, God destroyed them in the wilderness. The second is the sin of pride. The angels that kept not their first estate God punished by banishing them from heaven and by keeping them in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. The last of all is the sin of sensuality, and of this Sodom and Gomorrah are the example.

Here are three distinct and terrible instances of punishment brought upon persistent iniquity. And now there are three other forms of sin that are mentioned one after another. First, the way of Cain: that is, the way of self-righteousness, unwillingness to accept of God's appointed sacrifice; then, the way of Balaam: that is, the way of avarice, the seeking of earthly good and making our relations to God subordinate to what we can get from them in the way of advantage to ourselves; and then, last of all, there is the way of Korah, the way of pride and rebellion, which are immediately followed by the downfall of destruction. And now, after having thus set before his readers the punishment of those who are rebellious and the character of those thus treated, he comes to what we may call the remedy; and in the seventeenth verse he begins to tell us of what we are to do with regard to this matter. The first thing we are to do is to remember the word of God that has been left us in order to keep us from this transgression and rebellion. Then, secondly, we are to continue in love and faith and prayer, Christian graces and virtues which are antidotes to all evil. Thirdly, we are to bring back those who have gone astray, treating them in different ways according to their peculiar

necessities. Some of them are so involved in iniquity that, in order to save them, we must run some risk ourselves. We must pluck them like brands from the burning, even at the risk of our own burning; others are to be treated more gently and so brought back to Christ.

All this is an inculcation of faithful watch-care and discipline on the part of the Christian church. The Epistle is not speaking of those who are outwardly ungodly, but rather of those who have already professed the religion of Christ, and are in danger of being led astray by false teachers, to the harm of the Christian church and the ruin of their own souls. Last of all, there comes the magnificent exhortation and doxology with which the Epistle closes. It is one of the noblest specimens of eloquence and solemn grandeur in the whole book of God.

There are one or two things in this Epistle of Jude, in addition to those which I have mentioned, which challenge attention at the very outset, and which have constituted an obstacle to the reception of the book as authentic and inspired. There is an apparent quotation from an Apocryphal writing, the book of Enoch. In the early Jewish times a circle of tradition gathered itself around the name of Enoch, the patriarch who walked with God, and was not, because God took him. Enoch came to be regarded not only as a representative of Old Testament piety, but as a representative also of Old Testament science. It was said that Enoch was an astronomer, and that he taught the movements of the heavenly bodies to the men of his time. It was said that he preached not only to man, but also to angels.

There comes down to us from remote antiquity a book which purports to be the book of Enoch. Those who have investigated it most fully, and who know most about it, describe it as a delirious dream. I have tried to read it. I doubt whether any one of you could read it through. It is a rhapsody without beginning, middle, or end; it is a series of reflections or meditations upon Old Testament truths by a mind which has in it all the instincts of speculation, but which is bound down by very few ties to solid fact. In it there are a few traces of truth, a few sagacious conjectures with regard to the meaning of Old Testament Scripture; but the most of it is vague, transcendental, and worthless dreaming with regard to Old Testament characters and God's method of dealing with the world.

Did Jude actually quote from that Apocryphal book? If Jude did quote from it, does he sanction that Apocryphal writing? Could he have quoted from a book that was not the word of God and thereby have given to it his sanction? Was not this a mistake, inconsistent with the real inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit, in Jude's writing? These questions presented themselves very early to the Christian Fathers, and led some of them to throw out the book of Jude from its place in the canon.

Two or three things may be said in regard to this. In the first place, we do not certainly know that this book of Enoch was in existence when Jude, the writer of the Epistle, wrote. In fact, one of the most learned of the modern German investigators, one who I think has as much weight of argument upon his side as any one who has written with regard to this matter,

declares that this book of Enoch was not written until about 132 after Christ, long after Jude's time. Jude, therefore, does not quote from the book of Enoch at all. Jude is quoting a tradition which had come down through many successive mouths from very early times; this tradition was a true tradition; and, in quoting it, the Holy Spirit vouches for its truth. That may be the proper explanation. Jude may be quoting, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, a tradition which had come down from early times, and to which he gives the sanction of inspiration.

The words quoted begin with this sentence: "The Lord comes with ten thousands of his saints to execute judgment upon the ungodly." The whole quotation gives us nothing new. It is only what in substance is vouched for in other parts of the New Testament and of the Old Testament as well; so that we cannot say, even if Jude quoted from the book of Enoch, that he has taken from that book of Enoch anything which was false or even anything which had not been revealed before. He may have quoted it just as Paul quoted from Epimenides, Aratus, and Menander, the Greek poets. Paul mentioned Jannes and Jambres. Where did Paul get them? Not from the Old Testament, but from some floating tradition. But by so quoting the floating Jewish tradition, he gives the sanction of inspiration to the truth of that tradition to just that extent. So, if Jude quoted from a book of Enoch that existed before his time, he only took from that book of Enoch the germ of truth that it contained and gave the sanction of inspiration to that. So, from whatever point of view we regard it, I do not think we are warranted in

maintaining that Jude gives his sanction to an Apocryphal book. He may give his sanction to some statement in that Apocryphal book if that book existed at his time; but the most probable conclusion is that the book did not exist at his time, but was written after his time, and that he quotes simply a floating oral tradition and gives to that oral tradition the sanction of inspiration.

In this reserve which Jude shows in his quotation we see the guidance of inspiration. There are a thousand statements in the book of Enoch which, if Jude had quoted them and given his sanction to them, would have given us almost conclusive proof that his Epistle was not canonical, and that the Holy Spirit had not indited it; but Jude takes nothing that is false, nothing that is not vouched for substantially by other portions of the Scripture. He is prevented from taking material that is not suited to his purpose. He is prevented from taking anything that would cast suspicion upon his general narrative.

A final objection to this Epistle is its tone of continuous invective. The second chapter of Peter's Second Epistle is the nearest parallel in the New Testament, and we have seen reason to believe that here Peter copied from Jude. Jesus' own denunciation of the Pharisees before his death may have served as a model both for Jude and for Peter. We must remember that God denounces sin, and that he commands his ministers, under some circumstances, to denounce it. Jude's fearful arraignment of wilful and persistent iniquity is no objection to its inspiration, but rather a proof. It is a solemn, scorching, withering representation of sin, and of God's just judgment against it. If

we consider the various sins that Jude reprobates, we shall see that this Epistle is not without its value to-day. There is the same unbelief, the same pride, the same sensuality, the same avarice, the same insubordination, the same disregard of authority to-day as in the times when Jude wrote; and these scathing denunciations and threatenings are needed to-day as warnings to watch and to repent.

How beautiful it is that, in connection with these denunciations, there comes in the most sublime doxology that is to be found in the whole New Testament! Can there be anything more solemn, more glorious than those words with which Jude closes? "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory, majesty, dominion, and power through Jesus Christ forever and ever. Amen." It is like Jesus' "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! Woe unto thee, Bethsaida!" followed immediately by his "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Jude's sublime utterance of praise is called forth by the judgments of God. There is a refuge from sin and death in God our Saviour. But God also judges and punishes iniquity, and his holiness is a matter of praise to the saints as well as his love. He will not look with favor upon iniquity. Just and true are thy ways, O thou King of saints! That seems to be the spirit of the Epistle of Jude.

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

THE last book of the New Testament has been wisely assigned its place at the close of our Bible. It is a large and comprehensive view of the conditions of the church and the course of history. It brings to our minds by anticipation the completion of God's work in humanity at large, the expansion of that germ which was once for all planted in the earth when, in the person of Jesus Christ, salvation was embodied and a new humanity created over which sin and death had no more dominion forever. In the study of this book our thoughts can rise from the beginning of the process to the end of the process, can pass from the beginning of the conflict to the end of the conflict, in the glory of the children of God and the gathering together of all the sons of God into one holy and blissful community in the presence of Christ, their Lord. These are only preliminary remarks, but they intimate to some extent the purpose and value of this book which we are considering.

The book of Revelation, or the Apocalypse, as it is so often called, is the revelation made to John the apostle; for all attempts to show that any other person than John was the author are futile in the extreme. Many of those who deny John's authorship of the Fourth Gospel, and even of the Epistles, are perfectly ready to concede that the Apocalypse is the work of John, and to hold that it has all the marks of a Johannine author-

ship. It must, however, have been written at a different time from the Gospel and the Epistles, because there are very marked differences between it and those other works of the apostle. The Apocalypse was by far the earliest writing of the apostle John, and although it now constitutes the last book of the New Testament, it was by no means the last book that was written. A very considerable interval came between the writing of the Apocalypse and the writing of the Gospel and of the Epistles. The Apocalypse was probably written before the destruction of Jerusalem, perhaps in the year 68; it was written by the apostle John, in Patmos, where he had been exiled during the reign of Nero and in the very last portion of Nero's reign; it was written under a persecution which had its greatest violence at Rome, but the farthest circles of whose waves had reached out as far as Asia Minor to Ephesus, where John was then in charge of the churches which Paul had left to his supervision at his martyrdom.

John had remained in Jerusalem until the death of the apostles Peter and Paul had rendered it necessary that some one of apostolic authority should take charge of the great and influential churches that were located in the western part of Asia. You remember that our Lord, at his death, left his mother in the charge of John. Tradition relates that he not only took her to his own home, but that he remained in Jerusalem, caring for her as the representative of our Lord, until Mary's death; and this death did not occur until some thirty years after the death of our Lord. Then, in prospect of the destruction of Jerusalem, and knowing that the city of the Old Testament was soon to be

obliterated from the face of the earth, John made his way to Asia Minor, took up his residence in Ephesus, and began to take charge of the churches in that region.

Soon after this there sprang up the persecution under Nero. John was banished to Patmos, and there, on a certain Sabbath day, the Spirit of the Lord opened to him the future, and prepared him to communicate great truths with regard to God's dispensation to the churches of Asia, of which he was the superintendent.

The early origin of the Apocalypse accounts for some of the main difficulties with regard to the genuineness of either the Apocalypse or the Gospel. We find that the Apocalypse is written in a style that, in some respects, is different from the style of the Gospel and of the Epistles. The main differences might be characterized in this way: The Gospel and the Epistles are in simple and flowing Greek. They are not broken, or rugged in style. There is a spirit of sympathy and of love in them, which you do not find so evidently present in the Apocalypse. In addition to this, you find some striking peculiarities of Greek construction in the Apocalypse, which are totally absent in the Gospel and in the Epistles. There are lapses of grammar. The Greek preposition which should govern the genitive is used occasionally with the nominative instead. Any student of Greek will recognize the strangeness of this peculiarity, and there are certain other things of a similar sort which I need not mention. I am inclined to explain this by saying that, during his early life, the apostle John had his dwelling-place in Jerusalem, and was accustomed mainly to the use of the Aramaic language. In other words, Greek was not in constant use

and, therefore, when he goes to the churches of Asia Minor and begins to use Greek continually, it is with a less perfect familiarity than that which he attains afterward; and these lapses of grammar, and these peculiarities of style, are due to the fact that he had not worked into the Greek language as he afterward did. Thirty years afterward, when he had become an old man and Greek had become to him, as it were, his mother tongue, he uses it with perfect fluency, and not only with fluency, but with very remarkable beauty and smoothness and eloquence.

This is probably one of the reasons why the style of the Apocalypse differs from the style of the Gospel. But there is another reason: When John wrote the Apocalypse he was by no means so old as he was when he wrote the Gospel and the Epistles. It is true he was not young. You cannot call a man of fifty a young man. Yet a man of fifty still retains the freshness and fervor of his youthful style; and as you read the Apocalypse, I am very sure you will recognize some of that fire and vivacity, some of that intensity and energy which is indicated in the epithet "Boanerges," or "Son of Thunder," which our Lord conferred upon him. I suppose there are more thunderings and lightnings in the Apocalypse than in any other book of the Bible; and it seems very fitting that Boanerges, the Son of Thunder, John the apostle, should have been the author of it.

As time went on and the outward difficulties of the church were less, as the season of conflict gave place to a season of calm, as youth was succeeded by age, it seems only natural that John the apostle should have

become softened. In the Gospel and the Epistles you seem to hear again and again repeated the words which tradition ascribes to John in his old age, "Little children, love one another." Love became more and more the dominant key of his life; the Gospel and the Epistles represent this softened nature, this effect of the Spirit of God upon him, this maturity of Christian character. I do not say that the fiery element, the intense hatred of wrong is absent from the Gospel and from the Epistles. You find it there still, and yet it is toned down, as you do not find it toned down in the Apocalypse.

That the Apocalypse was written before the destruction of Jerusalem I think is very plain from some things in the Apocalypse itself, namely, the fact that the Jews are spoken of there as an existing hostile power, as they are not in the Gospel and in the Epistles. You remember that, toward the close of Paul's life, but during Paul's active ministry, Judaizing teachers were his most active, persistent, and malignant enemies; and the tendency to turn the church of Christ into an old-fashioned Jewish synagogue was the evil tendency of the day. The Jews were the persistent and malignant opposers of Christianity. In the Apocalypse you find the recognition of that present enmity and hatred, as you do not find it in the Gospel and in the Epistles. In the Gospel and in the Epistles John refers to the Jews as enemies of Christ, it is true, but it is perfectly evident that their power for evil has long since passed away.

In the Apocalypse, when the apostle is describing those two witnesses that were slain and that lay dead

for a time, he represents them as lying in the streets of the city in which our Lord was crucified. If Jerusalem at that time had been destroyed and blotted out from the face of the earth, it is hardly possible that John would have spoken of it as if it were still existing, as if the streets were there, and as if this scene which rises before him could yet be conceived of as taking place just as he describes it. That mystical number, the number 666, which is given by the author of the book of Revelation as a sort of key to the present application of his prophecy, can be interpreted most easily and simply, I think, as an allusion to the reigning emperor; namely, the Emperor Nero. If you will take each letter of the words NERON KAISAR, according to its numerical value in Hebrew, you will find that these letters make up the precise number 666 that is recorded; and when John says that five kings have already passed away and have had their day, it is most natural that these five kings should refer to the five who had reigned at Rome: namely, Cæsar, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, and Claudius. Then he names the sixth as the one that now is, and that sixth one is Nero. Then, to confirm these conclusions, he speaks of another that follows who is to continue but for a little space; and Galba, who followed Nero, had his place upon the throne, as we know historically, for only seven months; so that the prophecy seems to have more light thrown upon it than if we regard it as written in the time of Domitian, as some have thought, some thirty years afterward.

It has been argued, in reply, that we do not give time for the development, in the churches of Asia, of

the peculiar tendencies which the apostle John is reprobating in the Apocalypse. Well, I say, evil sometimes grows very rapidly; the apostle Paul warned the Ephesian elders, even in his day, against these evil tendencies; declaring that, "of themselves even, some would rise and would lead away disciples after them"; and it is not improbable that, in a very few years after, these tendencies may have become so developed as to call for John's warnings and reprobations. You remember, in the case of the Galatians, how soon they turned from the faith. Evil, I repeat, sometimes grows very rapidly; and, as we find these very tendencies recognized by the apostle Paul, it is nothing at all improbable that, after Paul had been taken away and Peter had suffered martyrdom, these tendencies should have very speedily required reprehension and rebuke such as we find given to them in the book of Revelation.

The times in which the book of Revelation was written need to be taken into account, in order that we may get a proper apprehension of the object of it. Remember that the Jewish nation had reached its climax of hostility to God and his truth, its climax of inward moral corruption and rottenness. At the time when this Apocalypse was written the Jewish nation was simply ripe for destruction. It had turned against Christ, and it had turned against God. The high-priesthood was openly sold in the market for money; high priest after high priest obtained his office by bribery; and, having obtained his office, signalized his holding of it by the most shameful wickedness of every kind. The persecution of Christians was a common thing. Christians came at last to be excluded from the

courts of the temple, and the Jews became enemies of all that was good. All idea that they were holy people, made for the service of God, seemed to pass from their mind; they became an apostate church, that remained only to call down upon it the judgments of God.

On the other hand, the Roman Empire was just now in a condition equally corrupt, and equally fit for divine retribution. The Romans for centuries had, by war and conquest, enslaved the world and carried tens of thousands of captives to Italy, there to be "hewers of wood and drawers of water"; so that the whole fabric of the Roman commonwealth rested upon a vast basis of human slavery, the atrociousness and monstrosity of which passes belief. The emperors became so inflated with pride of power that they set themselves up in the place of God himself; they were objects of worship to their subjects; altars were set up, upon which sacrifices were offered to them as gods, in every great city of the Roman Empire.

And Nero was upon the throne at this time. Nero was a sort of concentrated essence of everything that is depraved and base in human history. He murdered his mother; he murdered his brothers; he murdered his wives. His history was stained by every lust and every crime in the catalogue; and now he began the persecution of Christians. He set fire to Rome, and, finding that public reprobation followed the act, he laid the blame of it upon the Christians, wound multitudes of them with linen bandages, loaded them with wax, and set them up in his garden at night as torches to burn, in order that his great public gatherings might be graced by the spectacle. That was Nero—one of

the most cold-blooded and horrible examples of crime that has ever defaced the history of the world—and in Nero we have the beginning of a long line of persecutions of the Christian church.

John writes at the beginning of this tremendous conflict between heathen power on the one hand and Christian faith on the other, and just upon the verge of that tremendous visitation of God by which Jerusalem was swept away from the face of the earth. In view of these calamities that were to sweep away the Jewish temple and the old order of worship, and in view of the various persecutions and troubles that might come upon them as individuals and as churches, Christians needed to be strengthened with the thought that God was in the heavens, that the Lord reigned, that he saw the end from the beginning, that the same hands that were nailed to the cross held now the reins of power, and that all things would work together for good to them that love God. To confirm the faith of the people of God in view of a visitation of Providence, such probably as has never been seen in the history of the world, and to make them sure that God would give victory to his saints at last, this was the great end for which the Apocalypse was written.

With regard to the interpretation of the Apocalypse, there is great diversity of opinion. There have been hundreds of interpreters, and not many of them agree. There are, first of all, the Præterists, or those who believe that everything in the Apocalypse had taken place, or was to take place in a very few years after the death of the apostles; there are, secondly, the Futurists, or those who hold that none has yet taken

place, but that all are to take place far-off in the future; and then, thirdly, there are the Continuists, or those who hold that the Apocalypse is a continuous historical narrative, an unfolding of the history of the church of God from the beginning to the end.

Let me give you what I think to be the key to it all. The key to it all is found in the eschatological, apocalyptic discourse of our Lord Jesus Christ himself just before his death, the discourse in which he refers to the destruction of Jerusalem, but in which his account of the destruction of Jerusalem passes into an account of the end of the world. Prophecy is destitute of perspective. It does not take account of now and then, but presents before us a series of events of which the one passes into the other, with no clear dividing line between this and that. You have seen the views of a stereopticon, and you know how, as you are looking upon one view, another seems to be appearing; the first merges into the second; the first has gone, and the second is here; but you can never tell the precise point where the one ceases and the other begins. Just so, as our Lord is seated upon the Mount of Olives opposite Jerusalem, there passes before him, like a moving panorama, the terrible scenes that were to be witnessed only a few years after his death, in the destruction of Jerusalem. He sees mothers that are massacring and devouring their own children. He sees hundreds of thousands put to the sword. All these terrible scenes are passing before him, and he depicts them; but, behold, as he depicts this divine judgment so soon to be witnessed, the panorama becomes transparent, the present merges into the future, and, before you know

it, he is describing the judgment of the great day; the Lord is bringing all the nations of the earth before him and separating them, as sheep from the goats. No one can tell where the description of the destruction of Jerusalem ends, and where the description of the end of the world begins.

This eschatological, apocalyptic discourse of Jesus Christ furnishes the key by which we are to interpret the book of Revelation. As all the Epistles of Paul may be called only an inspired commentary upon Christ's last discourse to his disciples in the Gospel according to John, just so the whole book of Revelation may be called nothing but an inspired commentary upon Christ's apocalyptic discourse before he suffered. Notice two or three things with regard to Christ's discourse. The first is this, that it is vain to say that our Lord Jesus was describing there simply things that were taking place in his generation. It is perfectly plain that, although he *begins* with describing things that are taking place in his generation, he does not *end* there. He does not end with anything short of the end of the world; and so I think that our Lord's discourse furnishes a reason why we should completely give up the Præterist interpretation of the book of Revelation, which regards it as only a description of things that took place in the day of the apostles. It doubtless refers to some such things, but that is not the end of it. There is much more than that.

Again, if we take our Lord's discourse for a guide, we must equally throw out the view that the book of Revelation all belongs to the future. Our Lord's discourse certainly spoke of things that were then present

or were going to be within a few years after his death. We cannot accept the interpretation of the book which makes it all refer to things that have none of them yet happened; but then, on the other hand, it is equally true that the continuous or historical method has very much against it, when we look at what Christ has said in his discourse about the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world.

Our Lord does not attempt to fill up all the intervals between the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world. I infer that those who think we have, in the book of Revelation, a complete map of all the events that were to take place from the destruction of Jerusalem to the end of the world must be mistaken. Prophecy passes over vast intervals, and sometimes gives no account of the incidents that are in them. It may be, therefore, that large intervals are passed over in the book of Revelation, and that no account is taken of them.

I think I hear you say: "If you throw out all the interpretations, pray, what interpretations have you left?" Well, I say I have them *all* left; I mean that I have all the good in them left; and the interpretation which I would propose is substantially this: We have in the book of Revelation, as we have in the discourse of Christ, an exhibition of principles rather than of events, of principles illustrated here and there by events, but without intention to give us a continuous map of the whole. My general idea of the interpretation of the book of Revelation, then, regards it as an exhibition of principles.

As our Lord speaks of the destruction of Jerusalem

and the visitation of punishment upon his opposers, he elucidates principles of God's retributory judgment, which apply to the end of the world as well; the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world are both mentioned, simply as illustrating those principles. So we have great principles laid down in the book of Revelation, together with isolated illustrations of them.

Let us now take up the book of Revelation a little more in detail. We have, first of all, the prologue, in which the greatness and glory of Christ are set before us. The foundation of our hope is the fact that our Lord reigns, that he is a risen Saviour, that he has the keys of hell and of death, that he supervises his churches, that he walks in the midst of the golden candlesticks. This truth serves as the foundation of all that comes after, whether of doctrine or of duty.

There follows a description of the church which Christ is to supervise, with all its infirmities, with all its weaknesses, with all its dangers, yet with the life of God in it. It is, notwithstanding, a sevenfold lamp that is set up to burn here in the world.

After this we have a sort of summary, in which heaven is opened; there is a book before the throne; and that book or roll is sealed; no one can open the seal, until at last the Lion of the tribe of Judah prevails to open the seal, and all heaven rejoices.

I call this the summary of everything that is to come. The meaning of it is just this: The book is the book of God's decrees. That book no one can open; that is, no one can understand, except the Saviour himself, the Lamb of God, who *executes* these decrees in human history. He can understand and explain,

because he has himself formed the decree and he himself will execute it. So, one after another, he opens the seals; that is, he unrolls the book, breaking one seal after another as he unrolls it; and as he unrolls it he reads or explains it by the revelation that he gives to the apostle.

You remember how the revelations that follow succeed one another. First, the seven seals, then the seven trumpets, and finally the seven vials, or bowls. Do these represent successive periods of human history, or are they simply different representations of the same events?

I am inclined to this latter view, and for the reason which I intimated only a few moments ago. We have no sufficient reason for believing that, in the book of Revelation we have a continuous account of all the main events between the time of the apostles and the end of the world.

I am rather inclined to believe that we have here representations of the great future which are parallel to one another. In other words, the seven trumpets are parallel, are the same things represented in a different way, with the seven seals; and the seven vials are the same things, represented in a still different way, as the seven trumpets and seven seals.

The twentieth chapter, which intervenes, is a wonder in the book. In this chapter the first resurrection is distinguished from the second resurrection, as spiritual resurrection is distinguished from literal resurrection. In other words, in the first resurrection we have described a mighty movement of the Spirit of God in his people all over the world, a movement so mighty

comprehension, and engaged in the work of our salvation. In John's vision of the holy city, New Jerusalem, "the lamp thereof is the Lamb." Not "the light," as it was in our old version, but "the lamp." What is the difference between a light and a lamp? Why, light is something universally diffused, something indefinite. You see *by* it, but you cannot see *it*. A lamp is a light-bearer. A lamp is the narrowing down, the focusing of light, so that in the lamp the light becomes definite and visible. Have you ever thought you were going to see God, the Father, in the New Jerusalem, as separate from Christ, the Son? I do not think you will. "He that hath seen *me* hath seen the Father," says Christ. In Christ we have narrowed down and concentrated and made definite and visible the Godhead itself. This representation of John's Apocalypse is just the same as the representation of John's Gospel. "No man hath seen God at any time," and no man ever will; but "the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he *hath* declared him"; and he *will* declare him to his saints forever; so that the Lamb shall be the Lamp of the heavenly city; and in Christ we shall see the perfected glory of God. May all who read these lectures "enter in by the gates into the city" from which there is no more going out forever; and in the presence of God and of the Lamb, may we see directly and perfectly what we have seen here only in an indirect and imperfect way. Then we shall see as we are seen, and know as we are known; and, seeing Christ our Saviour as he is, we shall at last be like him.